

THE ROAD TO PEACE:
THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN SUDANESE CHURCH IN COMMUNAL
STABILISATION AND NATIONAL RESOLUTION

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2008

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Acknowledgments

It is impossible to consider the completion of this work without immediately acknowledging the numerous individuals who helped facilitate this journey. I owe a special debt of gratitude to the many southern Sudanese who graciously expanded the breadth and depth of this thesis. I have been humbled, challenged and encouraged by the strength of your vibrant testimony. Thank you. I am especially grateful to Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier whose friendship was the origin of this work and for that I will always be in your debt, John Riak who spent numerous hours ensuring my time in Kakuma was a success, the staff of the Mobile Bible School, Sylvester Thomas the Canon of All Saints Cathedral in Khartoum, Lodi Francis and Terensio Alfred for their guidance and support in Oliji Refugee Camp, Matthew Mathiang Deang a consistent champion for southern Sudanese peace, Stephen Tut of the Centre for Documentation and Advocacy and Michael Ouko of the New Sudan Council of Churches. I am indebted to The University of Edinburgh Development Trust and their Small Projects Grant programme that contributed to the costs of my first research trip to Sudan. I am also appreciative for the hosting and encouraging support of Alan and Elaine Stanford in Washington D.C., Frank and Sharon in Uganda, the team in Khartoum who made my visit to Sudan possible, Deborah Fikes of Midland, Texas whose help was immediate and unquestioning, Michael Horowitz for access to the Sudanese files at the Hudson Institute, Armin Zimmermann and Roderick Campbell for their insightful comments on the refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda and for Henri Minder, your friendship has had a deep and permanent impact on my life. I have benefited immensely from the staff and students of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World especially Elizabeth Koepping, Afe Adogame, David Kerr and my supervisor Jack Thompson. I am grateful for the many who personally prayed, encouraged and supported this endeavour especially my parents Patrick and Jeri Brown, extended family, those of you who came to visit and the Chandlers who became family. There are numerous others who deserve mention but none more so than my wife Amy. Your support spiritually, emotionally, physically and materially is beyond words. This work is a testimony of love in the midst of difficulties, faith in uncertainty and support in the midst of transition. Thank you.

Declaration

While grateful for the assistance of numerous individuals, the thesis was composed in its entirety completely and solely by myself as was all of the undertaken research. Any deficiencies therein belong solely to the author. The submitted thesis has not been utilised in the pursuit of any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature

Date

Abstract of Thesis

This thesis examines the part played by Christian churches in the communal stabilisation of three refugee settings and in the national resolution of the second Sudanese civil war. Based on extensive field research in Sudan and in Sudanese refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda, the thesis is further underpinned by current theories on displacement, social identity and conflict resolution. Ranging from grassroots pastors to Presidential Cabinet Ministers, altogether more than one hundred fifty church and political leaders were consulted through individual interviews and focus groups with more than seventy-five recorded hours. Archives at The Centre for Documentation and Advocacy in Nairobi, Kenya, the New Sudan Council of Churches' Archive in Kampala, Uganda, the Sudan Archive at the University of Durham, United Kingdom and the Hudson Institute in Washington D.C., United States were also utilised.

The thesis commences with an examination of three grassroots communities in refuge, Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, the internally displaced of Hajj Yusuf, Khartoum and Olijji Refugee Camp in Uganda. In establishing the social impact and influence of the churches on the respective displaced community, each of the three local manifestations function as a case study detailing endeavours by Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Catholic and Pentecostal churches to respond to arisen needs, resolve political instabilities and reconcile ethnic tensions. Though the exact influence of the churches differs in each context one overarching theme that emerges is greatly enhanced communal stabilisation. Alongside the numerical growth and social impact of the churches at the local level, the ecumenical New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) employed a three-tiered strategy to facilitate national resolution of the second civil war as is delineated in the second half of the thesis. First, through 'the people-to-people peace process' the NSCC directly mediated grassroots reunification throughout southern Sudan. Second, the NSCC functioned as the primary channel of Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) criticism and utilised its growing clout to pressure the SPLM/A to adopt measures of good governance and pursue in good faith negotiated settlement with the Government of Sudan. Third, the NSCC stood behind a successful international campaign that lobbied and secured engagement from regional and European and American governments critical to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

By paralleling three local communities and the NSCC national resolution initiatives the thesis proffers several important conclusions about Christianity and the civil war in south Sudan including enumerating rationales related to the explosive growth of Christianity, demarcating several nascent indicators of a Christian-influenced civil religion, highlighting the growing social and political impact of the churches throughout south Sudan and finally, delineating several general conflict mediatory keys relevant to the churches' endeavours. The thesis furthermore clearly demonstrates that in the midst of civil war the southern Sudanese indigenous churches bolstered communal stabilisation at a grassroots level, substantively impacted the emergence of national political resolution and thereby directly facilitated the road to Sudanese peace.

Abbreviations

CMS	Church Mission Society
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DOP	Declaration of Principles
ECS	Episcopal Church of Sudan
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MBS	Mobile Bible School, Kakuma Refugee Camp
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NIF	National Islamic Front
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
PCOS	Presbyterian Church of Sudan
RECONCILE	Resource Centre for Civil Leadership
RSD	Right for Self-Determination
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SCC	Sudan Council of Churches
SPC	Sudan Pentecostal Church
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
YCF	Young Christian Fellowship

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Chapter One

Introduction and Historical Overview

‘If you are suffering you know you just remember that you are dead if you don’t survive.’

Daniel Aketch¹

‘We are victorious with this cross... In our desperate situation we are victorious, disappointed but victorious.’

Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier²

Strung out on the frayed edges of Juba, capital of southern Sudan, lies a field on the cusp of the Nile River embodying a stunning menagerie of lost dreams, tragic lives and a tenuous future. Hunkered down are the charred remains of tanks casually abandoned and quickly forgotten – or at least ignored – in a field sown with twisted pieces of useless metal. It is an image not quickly forgotten: war machines dispassionately tossed aside, their usefulness outlived with stories of contested identity, ambiguous motives and empowered voices struggling to overcome. It is an image of individuals, communities, and even a nation seeking to rebuild a tattered land with the beckoning ghosts of war still whispering in their midst. It is an image repeated in virtually every corner and region: Darfur to the west, Beja to the east, and most poignantly, south Sudan.

Since independence 1 January 1956 Sudan has almost constantly been locked in the horns of war, particularly in the south where fighting concentrated until 2005. Since 1983 southern Sudan witnessed two million southern deaths,³ the internal

¹ Daniel Aketch, member of Episcopal Church of Sudan, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

² Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier, Assistant Director of Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency and former Vice Chairman of the NSCC, interview with author, 24 July 2005, Edinburgh.

³ United Nations High Commission for Refugees, “2004 Supplementary Appeal for Sudan: Preparatory Activities for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees,” *UNHCR* (November 2003), 3; available from www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/partners/openssl.pdf?tbl=PARTNERS&id=40d301854; Internet; accessed on 16 June 2005. Given the difficulty procuring accurate statistical information, only official numbers as

displacement of three to four million individuals⁴ and the forced migration of over six hundred thousand Sudanese into the refugee camps of neighbouring nations.⁵ Rape, amputation, slavery, forced child soldiering, complete razing of entire villages, unjustified imprisonment and starvation inflicted on entire communities as a tool of military might was frequent and numerous. In listing such litanies of travesty it is



Figure 1 - Field of Tanks in Juba

easy to categorise and gloss over the destruction and destabilisation caused to the multitude of individuals standing behind each statistic and

figure. The voiceless many could perhaps echo the words of fellow southerner James Bouth Cadech, ‘people are somehow affected mentally by this long war. There is hardly a family that has not lost somebody they value and this causes trauma here. There is hardly a family that have not lost valuables in this conflict... Some people are dying out of debt. Others are becoming mentally ill.’⁶ The effects of war will ripple in Sudanese history and consciousness for generations to come. Some will never recover. But this is only half the story. Southerners have frequently endeavoured to rebuild their society, reconcile their conflicts, stimulate economic development, generate democratic governance and live as an empowered community.

Hope, closely guarded and cautious at best, stems from a long-awaited peace process. On 9 January 2005 amidst great fanfare and ceremony in the packed Kenyan Nyayo Stadium the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), a

reported by the UN will be quoted throughout the thesis. Proposed statistical information reflects a limited process of consensus between multiple sources, a median within a range of possible figures.

⁴ UNHCR, “2004 Supplementary Appeal for Sudan,” 4.

⁵ United Nations High Commission for Refugees, “2003 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook Country Data Sheet – Sudan,” *UNHCR* (January 2005), 325; available from www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/country?iso=sdn; Internet; accessed on 16 June 2005.

⁶ James Bouth Cadech, Community Development Officer of PACT Kenya, interview with author, 17 January 2006, Nairobi.

Sudanese resistance movement under the command of late Colonel John Garang de Mabior,⁷ formally signed a peace agreement with the Government of Sudan ending a civil war that wracked the divided nation for twenty-two years.⁸ Though the silent testimonies of travesty must be recounted, they are balanced with the understanding that in the midst of anonymous systems and faceless forces numerous individuals dared to defy death with courage, wisdom and perseverance. Formal resolution symbolised in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) capped a long road to peace involving unprecedented southern identity transformation, south-south reconciliation and national negotiation.

Throughout this period of destabilisation a growing undercurrent steadily crested to surface as a primary interlocutor: the Sudanese church.⁹ Moving from marginalised periphery to central axis, Christianity as purveyed through the Sudanese church emerged as a principal mediator with individual, communal and national permutations. For many the churches carried a crucial element, hope. Although frequently minimised by external perceptions Christianity within southern Sudan procured communal stabilisation and initiated impulses leading to national

⁷ The SPLM is the political wing that augments the military forces of the SPLA. While technically distinct, in practice both were overseen by a single National Executive Council chaired and controlled by John Garang. Although the SPLM/A is generally caricatured as a 'rebel' movement, the term 'resistance movement' is preferential in order to highlight the legitimacy of the SPLM/A's self-proclaimed programme of national prerogatives without diminishing the SPLM/A of its own political and military overtures and degradations.

⁸ The Comprehensive Peace Agreement enacted on 9 January 2005 reflects a peace initiative at only one layer in a multi-layer conflict. The agreement, negotiated through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace process, created an autonomous and democratic 'South Sudan' that for an interim period of six years shares oil revenue with the central government in Khartoum until a mandated referendum on full southern independence in 2011. A peace agreement between the Government and the National Democratic Alliance, a broad coalition opposing the government of which the SPLM/A is a member, was reached in Egypt on 19 June 2005. War continued in the east between the Government and the Beja Congress until 14 October 2006 and remains active to the west in Darfur though there have been intermittent attempts at negotiation.

⁹ The term 'church' refers to a loose ecumenical affiliation incorporating the predominant denominations in Sudan including Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, African Inland, Sudan Interior Church, and Sudan Church of Christ among others as embodied in the Sudan Council of Churches and the New Sudan Council of Churches. While the churches do not constitute a monolithic block, retaining their doctrinal distinctiveness and in recent years even engaging in direct denominational competition, to a large extent the churches have collaborated in a unified manner through the ecumenical bodies at a social and political level. The thesis will explore this development and utilises the term 'church' to refer to social and political affiliation rather than doctrinal or denominational unity. Similarly the thesis follows Philip Jenkins definition of a Christian: 'someone who describes himself or herself as Christian, who believes that Jesus is not merely a prophet or an exalted moral teacher, but in some unique sense the Son of God, and the messiah.' Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 88.

resolution. The thesis analyses the interconnected and multi-tiered process the Sudanese church pursued in facilitating the road to peace during the timeframe of 1989 – 2005 through an examination of three select local refugee settings and through national resolution initiatives undertaken by the New Sudan Council of Churches.

The thesis commences with an examination of select manifestations of Christianity particularly as it relates to its impact and influence upon those communities. The primary focus is on local indigenous southern Sudanese churches within refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda and among the internally displaced in Khartoum. Within the refugee context the thesis surveys how the local Sudanese church, underpinned by a growing re-identification with a Christian spirituality and delineation carrying numerous social and political ramifications, produced communal stabilisation through social relationship networking, integration, cohesion, reconciliation and hope-infused interpretations regarding suffering and the war. Understanding this shift in communal identification at the grassroots level forms a lens through which national endeavours can be interpreted.

Analysing local contexts, the divergent forms of Christianity expressed therein and an emerging broader Christian consciousness allows a deeper examination of the impact of Christian-influenced political initiation in the realm of southern reconciliation and national resolution. In this regard, the denominational organisation the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) has been paramount in both public activation and private diplomatic negotiation. Particularly at the level of national resolution the NSCC, as the thesis demonstrates, facilitated the road to peace by encouraging southern reconciliation, initiating efforts to influence the SPLA and generating effective international engagement campaigns.

Finally, the conclusion highlights several conflict mediatory keys that originate within the thesis. Specifically, the thesis demonstrates the necessity of multiple agencies internal and external, national and international working in tandem to increase the potentiality of sustainable peace. The NSCC clearly perceived the desirability of this arrangement and laboured accordingly. A shift in communal identification by many southern Sudanese at the local level to a vague 'Christian' demarcation allowed the NSCC to consolidate and further its influence and impact upon grassroots constituents, the policies of governance enacted by the SPLM and the legitimacy of the NSCC as a prime source for relevant information and capable

implementation at the international level. With its position thus strengthened and reinforced within the multiple segments of southern Sudanese society, Christianity therefore, directly facilitated the road to Sudanese peace.

Justification

Detailing the road to peace through an analysis of the influence of Christianity within three refugee communities and an examination of the connected regional reconciliation efforts and international awareness campaigns by the NSCC rests upon four justifications. First, following the coup d'état of Omar al-Bashir overthrowing the democratically elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi in 1989 and the subsequent implementation of a militant Islamic ideology, a dynamic multiplication of Christianity ensued among southern Sudanese.¹⁰ The rapidity of this growth led some scholars to claim that the Sudanese church is the fastest growing church in Africa¹¹ and that a 'majority of southerners and Nuba now call themselves Christian.'¹² This development encompasses a broad spectrum of demographics, denominations and geographies fundamentally altering analysis of Sudan. Although intimations and several limited examinations of this development exist, a systematic overview examining the growth of Christianity is not available, particularly in relation to the growth of Christianity within the refugee camps and

¹⁰ Ironically, 'a government which owes its legitimacy to its commitment to an Islamic revival is presiding over a Christian revival the like of which the country had not seen since the last Christian kingdom in Sudan dissolved into oblivion close to five centuries ago.' Abdelwahab El-Affendi, "The Paradoxes of War and Peace," in *Their Brothers' Keepers: Regional Initiative for Peace in Sudan*, ed. Francis M. Deng (Addis Ababa: Inter Africa Group, 1997), 44. Chapter Four will explore rationales related to the recent growth of Christianity.

¹¹ Bishop Zac Niringiye, Assistant Bishop of Kampala, interview with author, 23 February 2005, Edinburgh.

¹² Andrew Wheeler, "Church Growth in Southern Sudan 1983-1996: A Survey of Present Understanding," in *Land of Promise: Church Growth in a Sudan at War*, ed. Andrew Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 36. Though statistics offered are soft accumulations, out of an approximate 10 million southerners potentially as many as 7 million now claim Christianity. Prior to 1989 assuming only a limited Christian growth, indicated by all currently available resources, perhaps only 1 – 2 million southerners would have claimed Christianity. Growth primarily hewed to already established denominations resulting in demographic multiplication rather than denominational fragmentation though the advent of peace has already seen the introduction of new principally Pentecostal denominations that will challenge and alter the Sudanese Christian landscape. Further research is needed to elucidate more accurate numerical representation.

among internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹³ The thesis will address this development in part and suggest rationales for this explosive growth.

A second justification stemming from the alacrity of Christian growth concerns the subsequent importance that Christianity and the Sudanese church developed at communal and national levels. As an underlying ideological framework and filter Christianity helps individuals synthesise meaning, empowerment and regeneration in the midst of fragmentation and disintegration. Current social and political literature however frequently continues to undervalue the influence of Christianity relegating its importance to the realm of southern elite disassociated with the majority of the populace. However, as Marc Nikkel notes, southern Sudanese ‘Christians engage in a continual process of reinterpreting their painful experiences and [seek] to construct a positive vision of the future through a rich blend of biblical symbols, prayer, worship, dance, music and drama.’¹⁴ In addition to initiating international solidarity campaigns, Sudanese churches have also instigated important communal stabilisation endeavours particularly relevant in situations of displacement and refuge. As Sudanese refugee pastor Stephen Yier describes, the job of the church is to ‘pick up the human pieces that are traumatised and put them together.’¹⁵

A third justification concerns the proposed focus on refugee and IDP encampments. First, refugee camps exhibit a fundamental role in the contemporary political context. Refugee camps are not static but function as an interconnecting hub of information, personnel, movement and development. This is particularly true for the Sudanese church. For example, church leaders among IDPs in Khartoum commissioned and facilitated Sudanese IDPs as missionaries within southern Sudan.¹⁶ With almost perpetual instability throughout south Sudan the refugee and internal displacement camps potentially function with a degree of unparalleled

¹³ The principle example is Marc R. Nikkel, “The Origins and Development of Christianity among the Dinka of Sudan with Special Reference to the Songs of Dinka Christians” (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1993). Nikkel and most other scholars emphasise developments within the Sudan, neglecting the central role refugee camps currently enjoin.

¹⁴ Marc Nikkel, “The Cross as a Symbol of Regeneration in Jieng Bor Society,” in *Land of Promise: Church Growth in a Sudan at War*, ed. Andrew Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 111.

¹⁵ Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier, interview with author, 24 July 2005.

¹⁶ Andrew Wheeler, “Church Growth in Southern Sudan,” 18.

stability and educational and employment development opportunity. Though geographically peripheral, areas of refuge constitute a centrality to cultural and political development seldom acknowledged. Even within the broad literature constituting refugee studies, a majority employ a western dichotomy polarising religion into an internal element disengaged from external political and social functions inconsistent with a more holistic Sudanese cosmology. Furthermore, in relation to Sudanese refugees there is a particular dearth of analysis. In a comprehensive overview of available literature Desiree Nilsson notes only two limited studies in relation to Sudanese refugees in Uganda and none directly pertaining to Sudanese in Kenya.¹⁷ Nilsson concludes, 'religion is of immense importance in the Sudan and consequently also in the integration of refugees but not many studies are concerned with religion in relation to the displaced.'¹⁸

A second justification for focusing on refugee camps relates to logistical rationales. South Sudan encompasses a vast and diversified territory severely underdeveloped, difficult to access and potentially extremely hazardous. The refugee camps in contrast are relatively physically safer and bounded within concentrated areas. Thus the feasibility of a more detailed analysis concerning Christianity and the role of the indigenous church within the camp is greatly enhanced. Furthermore, with the recent signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is predicting a rapid repatriation of refugees originally anticipated to last two to three years culminating in 2008.¹⁹ As the refugee camps exhibited an important and unique force within the development of Sudanese Christianity, a detailed analysis is warranted during the interim period between refuge and reintegration. A broad

¹⁷ Desiree Nilsson, *Internally Displaced, Refugees and Returnees from and in the Sudan* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000), 14-15.

¹⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹⁹ United Nations High Commission for Refugees, "Operational Briefing on South Sudan, April 2005," *UNHCR* (April 2005) available from www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=PROTECTION&id=41d2c19a0&page=home; Internet; accessed on 16 June 2005. Although laudable, actualising this time frame remains an optimistic goal subject to further stabilisation in southern Sudan and dependant moreover, on a voluntary willingness by southern Sudanese. Gaim Kibreab, *African Refugees: Reflections on the African Refugee Problem* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1985), 103. Kenyan refugees, for example, have expressed little desire to repatriate until further development occurs within southern Sudan. "Sudanese Refugees in Kenya Fear Returning Home," *DPA*, 28 June 2005, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 29 June 2005. See also, "Southern Sudanese Still Flee to Uganda Despite Peace Deal: UN," *Associated Free Press*, 16 June 2005, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 28 June 2005.

analysis of the southern Sudanese church would be determinative only after open access and detailed information pertaining to development in currently inaccessible areas within the south is granted.

Third, the thesis focuses primarily upon the refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda and the displacement camps surrounding Khartoum as they adequately represent an ethnic and geographical diversity typifying the south. Major groups of refugees from the Sudan currently reside in Kenya, Uganda, Chad, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Egypt and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Refugees in Chad and the Central African Republic are beyond the present scope of study as they primarily originate from the Darfur region, an Islamic background and migrated due to relevant but distinctly separate political instabilities. The geographical and ethnic diversification of refugees within the Democratic Republic of Congo similarly constitutes part of the Ugandan composition. Although unique the cultural and political context of the refugees in Egypt is mirrored by the internally displaced surrounding Khartoum. Finally, although Christianity has played a significant role in the refugee camps in Ethiopia, many of the refugees originate from the Blue Nile province and other areas traditionally considered to be outside of southern Sudan and the camps themselves lost much of their political importance following the 1991 split of the SPLM/A.²⁰ Further rationales for focusing on Kenya, Uganda and Khartoum will be delineated in the relevant chapters.

A fourth justification for the thesis concerns the limitation of the proposed timeframe of study to 1989 – 2005. In 1989 under the political leadership of Omar al-Bashir and the religious leadership of Hassan al-Turabi the democratically elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi was overthrown. The National Islamic Front (NIF) formulated an ideology of Islamic fundamentalism and since 1989 elements of

²⁰ One of the principle non-southern Sudanese ethnicities that sought refuge in Ethiopia were the Uduk, among whom several scholars have demonstrated the recent growth and importance of Christianity. See Wendy James, "War & 'Ethnic Visibility': The Uduk of the Sudan-Ethiopian Border," in *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (London: James Currey, 1994), 140-64; Wendy James, *The Listening Ebony: Moral Knowledge, Religion, and Power Among the Uduk of Sudan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); and Jonathan E. Arensen, "Conversion among the Uduk: Continuity Versus Discontinuity," in *Land of Promise: Church Growth in a Sudan at War*, ed. Andrew Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 79-85. For a general introduction to the Sudanese refugee camps in Ethiopia see Assefaw Bariagaber, *Conflict and the Refugee Experience: Flight, Exile, and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 81-9.

Islamic latency have activated into militancy. From inducing forced conversion²¹ to declaration of *jihad*, elements of religion in recent development are particularly salient.²² The growth of Islamic fundamentalism has seen a corresponding strengthening of Christianity. Christian growth has markedly accelerated since 1989 although the roots stretch back to the late nineteenth century and were significantly strengthened during the first civil war, dubbed Anya-Nya I, and the decade of relative peace from 1972 – 1983. As the governmental centre of power increasingly fortified itself through Islamic ideology, peripheral disintegration correspondingly accelerated. That is, ‘paradoxically, while the “regional” movements are demanding a united Sudan free of any kind of discrimination among its citizens, successive “national” regimes have been pursuing policies that divided its people.’²³ This is particularly true of the current government in power since 1989. 2005 serves as a functional though intentionally soft end bracket corresponding with the signing of the CPA and the initiation of UNHCR managed refugee repatriation.

Methodology

Utilising five main sources of information for research the thesis is qualitative rather than quantitative. Throughout the process attention was given to establishing credibility by focusing on three interrelated concepts – validity, generalisability and reliability.²⁴ That is, the thesis is concerned with ensuring that the data presented is

²¹ Damazo Dut Majak, “Rape of Nature: Environmental Destruction and Ethnic Cleansing in the White Nile Basin,” in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 49.

²² Wal Duany and Julia Duany, “Genesis of the Crisis in the Sudan,” in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 177. Though *jihad* remained embedded in the political ideology, initially it was ‘casually injected’ as a pragmatic mechanism for recruiting military frontline foot soldiers, Abdel Salam Sidahmed, “The Unholy War: Jihad and the Conflict in Sudan,” in *Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999*, eds. Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 82-96.

²³ Yoshiko Kurita, “The Social Bases of Regional Movements in Sudan 1960s-1980s,” in *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (London: James Currey, 1994), 214.

²⁴ Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 93; Joseph A. Maxwell, “Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research,” in *The Qualitative Researcher’s Companion*, eds. A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 37-64.

valid and towards this end sought to reconfirm and triangulate information as much as possible. Furthermore, conducting research in multiple countries and distinctly different refugee settings increases the potentiality for extending theories across southern Sudan and developing research with greater stability and repeatability.

The first utilised research component was consultation of written resources, published and unpublished. Inclusive of journal articles, academic books and unpublished theses, emphasis was placed upon primary sources although secondary sources were utilised in the constructing of an ethnological and historical framework. In garnering current governmental and refugee actions and decisions a limited utilisation of newspaper articles also transpired.

The second and most substantial source of developed material was field research conducted during three separate time periods. The first occurred January – April 2006 including time in Nairobi and Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya; Khartoum, Yambio and Juba in Sudan; and Kampala and Oiji Refugee Camp in Uganda.²⁵ From December 2006 – January 2007 relevant individuals in Midland, Texas and Washington D.C were also consulted.²⁶ A third and final weeklong trip was taken to Khartoum during March 2007.

Research involved consulting four distinct groups of individuals. First, attention was given to church officials and ministers with a particular focus on the Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Pentecostal denominations.²⁷ Numerous individuals from a variety of positions were approached. Interviews, for example, were completed with lay readers, evangelists, pastors, deacons, bishops, the former Executive Secretary of the New Sudan Council of Churches, the Associate Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan-Akobo, the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan and numerous other individuals employed by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), the NSCC and other denominational bodies.

²⁵ The University of Edinburgh Development Trust through the Small Projects Grant programme generously contributed funding towards the cost of the first research trip.

²⁶ For the rationale behind the inclusion of this component see pages 12 and 226.

²⁷ Historically the Catholic Church has been the largest in Sudan though recent development has seen the Episcopal Church of Sudan challenging this position. The Presbyterian Church of Sudan remains the largest church among the Nuer, and though still fairly small, Pentecostalism appears to be growing throughout southern Sudan. Perhaps resulting from early expulsion of missionaries African Independent Churches (AICs) appear to be almost non-existent. Generalisations comparing and contrasting said denominations will be more thoroughly addressed in Chapter Four.

A second group of individuals consulted were political leaders with the aim of establishing research among the multiple segments of society and political hierarchies. For example interviews were undertaken with grassroots refugee zone leaders, chairmen of different ethnic refugee populations, judges, members of the Southern Sudanese Parliament, members of the Government of National Unity, the Acting-Governor of the State of Western Equatoria, the Speaker of the Parliament for the Government of South Sudan, and the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs. This group of informants helped establish more clearly the exact impact and influence of the Sudanese church upon both the relevant communities and the national peace process. Attempts were made to establish the accuracy of data and theories presented by church leaders and thereby more fully develop the subtleties of actual influence.

Third, members of the refugee and displaced communities were consulted primarily through the use of focus groups in each setting. As a method, while focus groups are not conducive to generating statistical analysis they increase the potentiality of generalisability important for the research undertaken in the thesis. In convening the focus groups attention was given to incorporating a broad spectrum of ethnic, geographical and age diversification. Prior to the beginning of each focus group time was given to explain the purpose, the nature and the intended use of the research. The format was semi-structured.²⁸ In order to help overcome the potential for repressing or constricting views, after formally concluding either a focus group or interview, time was allotted for participants to reflect upon or address any issue they deemed important whether it was raised or not and to ask the researcher any question. This frequently extended the conversation and offered numerous insights.²⁹

A final group consulted were individuals who were observers but not direct participants in either church or political realms. In some instances this proved

²⁸ Charlotte Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (London: Routledge, 1999), 94-5.

²⁹ Focus groups are 'particularly useful for allowing participants to generate their own questions, frames and concepts and to pursue their own priorities on their own terms, in their own vocabulary.' Jenny Kitzinger and Rosaline S. Barbour, "Introduction: The Challenge and Promise of Focus Groups," in *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, eds. Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 5. See also Michael Bloor, Jane Frankland, Michelle Thomas, and Kate Robson, *Focus Group in Social Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2001).

difficult. Nonetheless individuals with Sudanese and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), faculty at the University of Juba, faculty at the University of Khartoum and the paramount practitioner of the Sudanese indigenous religion in Oliji Refugee Camp were interviewed. Altogether there were over one hundred fifty participants, including more than seventy-five conducted individual interviews and focus groups and more than seventy-five recorded hours. This second source of research information formed the core foundation of the thesis connecting and interpreting other methodological sources.³⁰

Developing alongside the interviews and focus groups was an important third source of research information, personal fieldnotes.³¹ Most days time was given to recording actions, descriptions, settings and impressions. To help with recall throughout the day key words and ideas were jotted down until they could be fully developed. During the field research the fieldnotes served as an important venue for limited and initial analysis that enabled the development of general constructs that could be tested and refined. They later became an important source of reconfirming contexts and settings and recreating the immediacy of the field research.

A fourth source of research information stems from interviews conducted with knowledgeable individuals outside of the immediate Sudanese context. Midland, Texas clergy and laity such as Deborah Fikes, who significantly contributed to a national and international solidarity campaign directly resulting in the engagement of the United States in the peace process, were interviewed. United States Congressional staff and other Washington based activists specifically involved with Sudan were also consulted. This group of individuals triangulated information presented by the leadership of the New Sudan Council of Churches and more fully elucidated the effectiveness of the NSCC's international approach and strategy.

A fifth and final source of research was information garnered through archival review. Archival work was undertaken at the Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, an independent Sudanese NGO based in Nairobi, Kenya and the publisher of a leading southern Sudanese political magazine. The official NSCC archive currently held at the office of the Resource Centre for Civil Leadership

³⁰ For a list of all interview and focus group participants see Appendix Two.

³¹ See Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

headquartered in Kampala, Uganda was also consulted. Archival work at these two locations helped elucidate official policy positions and the role of the NSCC in mediating various peace agreements through the people-to-people peace initiatives. The Sudanese archive at the University of Durham, the paramount Sudanese archival centre in the United Kingdom, was also reviewed as was material housed at the Hudson Institute in Washington D.C. A fifth and final archival source were several official websites. Particularly relevant is the UNHCR website hosting official statistical information, reports and guidelines.³²

A final methodological note concerns the inclusion of the three refugee camps in the thesis. Each of the three camps – Kakuma in Kenya, the displaced in Khartoum and Oligi in Uganda – are unique and distinct with the context, security situation and ethnic diversification greatly varying. Furthermore the role of the churches and their impact is remarkably different among the three camps. The thesis therefore approaches each camp as a unique case study significant and relevant in and of itself. This approach fostered divergent and contrasting cases forcing analysis beyond initial impressions. This furthermore enriched the generalisability of the thesis specifically in relation to the overarching influence and impact of the church on southern Sudanese communal stabilisation and national resolution. Chapters Two, Three and Four therefore serve as the foundational roots representing the various levels of influence exerted by churches at the local level and cumulatively demonstrate the influence and rationale for the impact of the NSCC at the regional and national levels. Chapters Five and Six directly build upon these three distinct strands forming an overarching case study depicting the indigenous Sudanese church as the prime facilitator of the road to peace.

The aforementioned sources of research are underpinned by the social identity theory asserting:

- (1) People are motivated to maintain a positive self-concept; (2) the self-concept largely derives from group identification (in addition to personal identification...); and thus (3) people establish positive social identities by comparing the ingroup against outgroups.³³

³² Although great caution must be utilised in consulting websites, official governmental websites and internationally recognised human rights and NGO websites provide pertinent information.

³³ Don Operario and Susan T. Fiske, "Integrating Social Identity and Social Cognition: A Framework for Bridging Diverse Perspectives," in *Social Identity and Social Cognition*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 42. The social identification theory is largely built upon the work of Henri Tajfel. See for example, H. Tajfel, "Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison," in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel (London: Academic Press, 1978), 61-76.

Especially relevant during times of rapid disintegration and renegotiation of communal identity, new group prototypes are derived and self-applied efficaciously ‘[transforming] one’s self-representation, perceptions, cognitions, feelings and behavior so that they are governed by the ingroup prototype. The far-reaching consequences of this process include conformity and group influence... cohesion and solidarity... and stereotyping.’³⁴ Within the Sudanese refugee context, Christianity initiated a new ‘ingroup’ with powerful individual and communal prototypes uniting a multiplicity of overlapping identities. The church became a new basis for social organisation and coherence imbuing individual refugees with opportunities of choice, control and empowerment through task-oriented dynamics. Initially a numerical minority, and currently a perceived minority, Sudanese refugee Christians ‘saw themselves more in terms of group membership’ than would majority group members and patterned themselves accordingly.³⁵ Approaching the church from the vantage point of a social organisation encompassing personal piety and civic functions further enhances the potentiality of meaningful communal and national mediation while offering secular NGOs a relevant venue through which religious impulses and institutions can be incorporated. The underlying social identity theory will therefore validate the overarching conceptualisation of Christianity, parlayed through the southern Sudanese church, as efficaciously procuring communal stabilisation and national resolution.

Historical Overview

Analysing the recent development of Christianity as a powerful social undercurrent influencing cultural and social developments that substantially facilitated the road to peace requires an understanding of the recent political and religious history of south Sudan. Importantly, British contact with Sudan initially centred on two individuals symbolically representing two interrelated themes still

³⁴ Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, “Social Identity and Social Cognition: Historical Background and Current Trends,” in *Social Identity and Social Cognition*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 11.

³⁵ Steven J. Sherman, David L. Hamilton and Amy C. Lewis, “Perceived Entitativity and the Social Identity Value of Group Memberships,” in *Social Identity and Social Cognition*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 98.

prevalent in Sudan. The first is General Charles Gordon.³⁶ Gordon accepted the ‘call’ to come to Sudan and free its people from the institution of slavery. Following a long tradition of British abolitionists, Gordon sent home disquieting reports of slavery and his attempts to overthrow the slave traders. These reports stirred British consciousness generating awareness and interest in Sudan where little existed before. When General Gordon cordoned in Khartoum was ‘martyred’ by the army of the Mahdi a surging public outcry demanded British retaliation. Eventually the reluctant government responded to this popular grassroots movement and decided to intervene in remembrance of the downtrodden ‘slaves’ of Sudan and their ‘hero’ Gordon.³⁷ International intervention extending conflict and European and American interest in ‘redeeming Sudanese slaves’ also played a key role in the recent southern conflict.³⁸

Intersecting with the life of General Gordon was a second larger than life figure known as the Mahdi. In 1881 Mohammed Ahmed took on the title Mahdi and began raising an army to expel the Turkiyyah administration.³⁹ Believing the eschatological message of Islamic purity and success proclaimed by the Mahdi, Sudanese flocked to his banner successfully dislodging the Turco-Egyptian government. Although the Mahdi died of natural causes shortly after the death of General Gordon at Khartoum in 1885, his successor, the Khalifa, continued ruling in his name extending a strict Islamic interpretation to governmental policies as the answer to the needs of the Sudanese populace.⁴⁰

³⁶ For an historical overview of General Charles Gordon see John Pollock, *Gordon: The Man Behind the Legend* (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1993).

³⁷ For a review of the discourses and rationales of the British abolitionist movements between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century see Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slavery in Africa, 1884-1926* (London: Routledge, 2005). This movement was itself built upon eighteenth century efforts heralded at least initially by British Quakers, Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mufflin Company, 2005).

³⁸ International politics has impinged on Sudan from British Condominium to the southern civil wars and in recent history, Darfur. For a more comprehensive approach to the linking of Sudanese history and broader international politics see Peter Woodward, *The Horn of Africa: State Politics and International Relations* (London: Touris Academic Studies, 1996).

³⁹ For more on the Turkiyyah administration see Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, “The Strategy, Responses and Legacy of the First Imperialist Era in the Sudan 1820-1885,” *The Muslim World* 91 (Spring 2001): 209-27.

⁴⁰ For more see Guenter Lewy, *Religion and Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 176-93.

Responding to grassroots pressure in 1898 British and Egyptian forces invaded the Sudan encountering a northern populace already steeped in an ideology of *jihad* and Islamic government. On 2 September 1898 the Khalifa attacked the invading forces six miles north of Omdurman in a battle breaking the Khalifa: ‘eleven thousand Ansar lay dead; some sixteen thousand were wounded. Kitchener lost forty-eight killed and 382 wounded.’⁴¹ British sovereignty was quickly established over northern Sudan though small religious rebellions led by individuals claiming to be either the Prophet Jesus or the Mahdi himself continued until World War I.⁴² Territorial claims over the south were more slowly adjudicated after competing claims by King Leopold of Belgium were overcome.⁴³ Even as late as 1926 parts of southern Sudan remained effectively outside of imperial administration.⁴⁴

Even after imposing control, however, the British government demonstrated far greater attention to northern Sudan than the south. Whereas the north was consistently developed through a process of devolution, the approach of ‘senior officials in Khartoum... was the fantasy that the Southern Sudan did not truly exist. They fervently wanted to forget the Southern Sudan – a nasty, insoluble, intractable difficulty.’⁴⁵ Espousing a policy of ‘care and maintenance,’ officials attempted to isolate southern Sudan from northern influence. ‘Care and maintenance’ equalled benign neglect and despite a hasty attempt at inclusion of southerners in national politics and culture following 1945, the south was ill equipped to function as a genuine partner with northern politicians in the formation of a national identity and

⁴¹ Robert O. Collins, “Introduction,” in *The British in the Sudan, 1898-1956: The Sweetness and the Sorrow*, eds. Robert O. Collins and Francis M. Deng (London: Macmillan, 1984), 9.

⁴² Ibid., 11-2. More troublesome to British administrators was a French dispute of the Sudan-Chad border in the Darfur region settled in March 1921. Lidwien Kapteijns, *Mahdist Faith and Sudanic Tradition: The History of the Masalit Sultanate, 1870-1930* (London: KPI Limited, 1985), 212. For a broader history of colonialism see Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (London: Abacus, 1992).

⁴³ For more on the activities of King Leopold particularly in the neighbouring Democratic Republic Congo see Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London: Pan Books, 2006).

⁴⁴ Robert O. Collins, *Shadows in the Grass: Britain in the Southern Sudan, 1918-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 90-101.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 123.

consciousness.⁴⁶ In 1955 as the imperialistic rule of Condomonium waned, Sudan teetered on the brink of its first civil war.

Since independence on 1 January 1956 Sudan has struggled in the formation of a national consensus.⁴⁷ In 1969 General Jaffer Nimeiri entered office through a political coup and in 1972 accepted the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement directly brokered by a partnership between the Sudan Council of Churches, the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World Council of Churches, concluding Anya-Nya I, the first civil war.⁴⁸ Nimeiri was vociferously hailed nationally and internationally for mediating peace, gaining substantial credibility particularly in the south. However political circumstances forced personal and political transformation and by 1978, 'a different Nimeiri had emerged: Nimeiri the author on Islam... Only six years later we see Nimeiri the author transformed into Nimeiri the Imam, making his way to mosque pulpits every Friday and preaching to the faithful on matters of this life and the life hereafter.'⁴⁹ In September 1983 he unilaterally abrogated the peace agreement plummeting Sudan into its second civil war with the proclamation of *sharia* in the popularly titled 'September Laws,' intense persecution enforcing the religious penal code and simultaneous freeing of thirteen thousand northern prisoners as an act of Islamic forgiveness.⁵⁰ Nimeiri was consequently overthrown in 1985 by Sadiq al-Mahdi who oversaw an ineffective democratically elected government until

⁴⁶ Realising the inequalities between north and south and fearing drastic repercussions for the country British officers in the Sudan Political Service lobbied for the creation of a special status for the south that would allow the region more time to develop. The British government rejected this request. Travis W. Horne III, *Imperial Diplomacy in the Era of Decolonization: The Sudan and Anglo-Egyptian Relations 1945-1956* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 150-1.

⁴⁷ Importantly Sudan was not the only country to struggle in this endeavour. Morris Szeftel notes that following colonialism numerous African nations have floundered on the inter-relationship of 'economic underdevelopment, the nature of the inherited state, and the pattern of political mobilization in post-colonial Africa.' Morris Szeftel, "Political Crisis and Democratic Renewal in Africa," in *Voting for Democracy: Watershed Elections in Contemporary Anglophone Africa*, eds. John Daniel, Roger Southall, and Morris Szeftel (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 10.

⁴⁸ For more on the Addis Ababa peace process see Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1975).

⁴⁹ Mansour Khalid, *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May* (London: KPI, 1985), 62.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 262. For a more technical review of steps taken by Nimeiri leading to the 1983 abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement by a prominent southerner with elite inside access see Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990), 225-39. The subtitle of Alier's book has famously become a slogan for many southern Sudanese concerning their perspective on the northern Sudanese government.

his ouster in 1989 by Omar al-Bashir and the National Islamic Front (NIF).⁵¹ As the 1980s ended, 'religious affiliation was no longer confined to being the major basis of political mobilisation, important though that remained; rather it had become a major issue.'⁵²

The second civil war originated out of a multiplicity of complex historical factors broadly summarised in three points.⁵³ First, northern political leaders continued to aggravate inherent tensions and exacerbate southern political identity and aspirations. For example President Nimeiri eroded almost complete southern support by consistently attempting to control southern politics through the dismissal and replacement of the Regional President at his directive and declaration of *sharia* in 1983.⁵⁴ Second, during the decade of relative peace, 1972 – 1983, the underdevelopment of southern Sudan was not rectified. NGOs largely substituted for state administration 'undermining the state institutions without establishing viable alternative structures,' thereby implicitly contributing to the development of the second civil war.⁵⁵ Finally, disintegration of southern unity and inter-southern hostilities directly facilitated the recapitulation of conflict. Numerous southern politicians preferring appeasement to Nimeiri's encroachments roused public resentment against their leadership⁵⁶ and were unable to restore internal peace among the numerous inter-ethnic feuds fuelled by the ready availability of military arms.⁵⁷ These three elements stirred strong dissatisfaction among the southerners, many of whom remained disappointed that Anya-Nya I had not resulted in secession, shifting

⁵¹ For an overview of Sadiq's government, particularly the internal politics see G. Norman Anderson, *Sudan in Crisis: The Failure of Democracy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999).

⁵² Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898-1989: The Unstable State* (London: Lester Crook Academic Publishing, 1990), 220.

⁵³ As Peter Woodward discerns, 'conflict arises from dynamic processes rather than simply the existence of different categories.' Peter Woodward, "Sudan: State Building and the Seeds of Conflict," in *Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and Its Alternatives*, eds. Peter Woodward and Murray Forsyth (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1994), 78.

⁵⁴ Woodward, *Horn of Africa*, 45-6.

⁵⁵ Terje Tvedt, "The Collapse of the State in Southern Sudan after the Addis Ababa Agreement: A Story of Internal Causes and the Role of the NGOs," in *Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of the Sudan*, eds. Sharif Harir and Terje Tvedt (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1994), 91.

⁵⁶ Elias Nyamlell Wakoson, "The Politics of Southern Self-Government 1972-83," in *Civil War in the Sudan*, eds. M. W. Daly and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 47.

⁵⁷ Douglas H. Johnson and Gerard Prunier, "The Foundation and Expansion of the Sudan People's Liberation Army," in *Civil War in the Sudan*, eds. M.W. Daly and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 120.

popular allegiance and allowing the resistance movement to quickly consolidate their support.

When battalions 104 at Nasir and 105 at Bor were ordered north in 1983 they refused and mutinied. Quickly joined by numerous soldiers and officers stationed around the Sudan, what started as a trickle turned into a flood. By 1984 fourteen southern garrisons and various Anya-Nya II forces had joined the resistance movement.⁵⁸ Gathering in Ethiopia under the auspices of Mengistu, leadership of the resistance movement consolidated under John Garang into the newly formed Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army.⁵⁹ With several quick successes the SPLA seemed poised to capitalise and negotiate a national settlement when on the very eve of the proposed agreement, Sadiq and the democratic government were forcibly swept out of power.

Coming to power in 1989 the NIF has maintained control over governmental mechanisms only recently allowing cosmetic changes with the inclusion of SPLM appointed politicians in the Government of National Unity. The NIF regime sought to initiate an 'Islamic revolution' with full implementation of *sharia*. This Islamic ideology resulted in hardened religious identities in both the north and south. However national peace has been intermittently pursued. In 1997 peace negotiations led to a Declaration of Principles between the government and the SPLM. In 1999 Turabi was imprisoned for planning a suspected coup and at a governmental level a posture of hard-line Islamisation began to slowly thaw. Formal peace talks were again held in October 2000 and finally in Machakos, Kenya in 2002. The Machakos Protocol served as the framework for the formal Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed 9 January 2005.⁶⁰ The process and politics leading to the CPA will be more fully explored in Chapters Five and Six.

⁵⁸ Millard J. Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Requiem for the Sudan: War, Drought & Disaster Relief on the Nile* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 16.

⁵⁹ In 1983 Garang was not the immediate or obvious leader. Rather, Garang successfully solicited the support of Mengistu by stressing that for the SPLA secession was a non starter and by officially identifying the SPLA as equally connected to other marginalised and underdeveloped areas in Sudan such as Darfur, the Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains. Yusuf Fadl Hasan, "The Role of Religion in the North-South Conflict with Special Reference to Islam," in *Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999*, eds. Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 35.

⁶⁰ UNHCR, "2004 Supplementary Appeal for Sudan," 3-5.

Alongside these recent political developments swept a powerful and



**Figure 2 – ECS Worshipper
with Personalised Cross**

interrelated undercurrent with a majority of southerners adopting Christianity for the first time.⁶¹ Today Christianity powerfully courses through every segment of southern society. Wooden crosses dot the land. Congregations gather in bombed-out sanctuaries, flimsy tin buildings, homes and under the open sky. Dozens of languages declare Christian praise. Weary and fragmented people are rapidly turning to churches – from Catholic, to Episcopal, to Pentecostal and Baptist – seeking hope and meaning in the midst of disintegration. But this is not the first time Christianity has swept through Sudan.

Echoing faintly is a distant memory of an ancient Christianity with Biblical connotations. Sudan is the land known in the Bible as Cush and it is probable that the ‘Ethiopian Eunuch’ was a Sudanese official before the year 40 CE. Consistent Christian contact began initially with the arrival of persecuted Christians from Egypt and by the fifth century Christianity served as the official state religion remaining so until the fourteenth century.⁶² Paralleling Christian expression in the south today, a key strand in Nubian Christianity was a public emphasis on the cross, utilised as a ‘symbol of Triumph already secured.’⁶³ While vestiges of this vibrant faith are still displayed in mosaics and paintings at the Khartoum National Museum, Islam almost totally supplanted this movement, in part because believers were isolated from broader Christian communities. Although the

⁶¹ The most comprehensive and substantive contribution to chronicling the history and development of Sudanese Christianity is the final volume in the Faith in Sudan Series, Roland Werner, William Anderson and Andrew Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church across 2000 Years* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000). The basis for this monumental work appears to be Andrew Wheeler, *The Church in Sudanese History: A B. G. C. TEE Course* (Mundri: Bishop Gwynne College, 1982).

⁶² Yusuf Fadl Hassan, “How Religion and State have been Handled in the Sudan, How they have Impacted the Three Faith Communities, Muslims, Christians and Indigenous Beliefs: A Historical Background,” in *Self-Determination, The Oil and Gas Sector and Religion and the State in the Sudan*, (London: African Renaissance Institute and Relationships Foundation International, 2002), 169.

⁶³ Giovanni Vantini, *Christianity in the Sudan* (Bologna: Novastampa di Verona, 1981), 152. The outstanding scholar on Nubian Christianity is Roland Werner, for example, Roland Werner, “‘The Cross Has Won. It Always Wins!’ The Early Nubian Church and Its Faith,” in *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment: The History of the Sudanese Church across 2000 Years*, Roland Werner, William Anderson and Andrew Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000), 19-120.

influence and existence of Nubian Christianity has faded, the memory of this ancient Christianity and perceived connections to the Bible continue to exert a powerful and creative force in contemporary Christian imagination.

Catholic missionaries first reached modern Sudan arriving 11 February 1848 after being commissioned by Pope Gregory XVI following the creation of the Vicariate Apostolic of Central Africa in 1846.⁶⁴ The first permanent mission station in southern Sudan was established at Gondokoro in January 1853.⁶⁵ Guiding these early efforts was Daniel Comboni, who while remaining culturally bound to the mid-nineteenth century, penned the visionary *Plan for the Regeneration of Africa by Means of Africans*, advocated for further incorporation of women into active ministry and participated in Sudanese famine relief.⁶⁶ During the Mahdiyya Catholic missionaries were forced to flee to Egypt regrouping as a mission to Sudan in exile and ministering among refugees. This time would prove a pertinent foreshadow for future ministry in Sudan. Following the initiation of Condomonium the Catholic mission returned under Bishop Roveggio establishing their first mission station at Lul among the Shilluk in 1901.⁶⁷ In 1902 American Presbyterians founded a mission station at Doleib Hill on the Sobat,⁶⁸ and in 1906 the first Church Missionary Society (CMS) base in the south was opened in Bor.⁶⁹ In 1905 southern Sudan was divided into three spheres of influence allocating the Catholics, Presbyterians and CMS each

⁶⁴ For an overview of Christian mission in southern Sudan before British-Egyptian Condomonium, Philip Chol Biowel, "The Christian Church in the Southern Sudan Before 1900," in *Southern Sudan: Regionalism & Religion, Selected Essays*, ed. Mohamed Omer Beshir (Khartoum: Graduate College Publications, 1984), 205-23.

⁶⁵ Richard Gray, *A History of the Southern Sudan 1839-1889* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 23-4, 38.

⁶⁶ For more on the theology of Comboni see Francesco Pierli, "Daniel Comboni: An Unquenchable Passion for Africa," in *Gateway to the Heart of Africa: Missionary Pioneers in Sudan*, eds. F. Pierli, M. T. Ratti and A. C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 26-58.

⁶⁷ Giovanni Vantini, "Lul: The First Missionary Post in Southern Sudan in the Twentieth Century," in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 315-23.

⁶⁸ Robert O. Collins, *Land Beyond the Rivers: The Southern Sudan, 1898-1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 288.

⁶⁹ The CMS were initially adamant that their mission was to be directed towards Muslims in Khartoum. In 1901 towards this end CMS missionary, Bishop Llewellyn H. Gwynne opened up a school among Coptic Christians living in Khartoum and in 1903 he was allowed to accept Muslim students. Ultimately, however, the British government prevented the CMS from establishing a mission in the North. *Ibid.*, 284-90.

one sphere.⁷⁰ All three of the main mission agencies focused primarily on evangelism and education. Foundational to understanding the rationale behind the recent explosion of Christian growth, ‘in 1926 a decision was taken making English the lingua franca, [although] missionary schools of various types used vernaculars to teach the Bible and other religious subjects, while English was used for secular subjects.’⁷¹ Nonetheless, the respective missions laboured throughout Condomonium with only limited success. In 1956 a commission of enquiry estimated that there were approximately one hundred eighty thousand to two hundred thousand Catholics and twenty-five to thirty thousand Protestants, representing less than ten percent of the total southern population.⁷²

The northern elite had long been suspicious of mission activity believing it was the root of the first civil war stemming from faulty British policy preventing the spread of Islam in the south during Condominium.⁷³ On 27 February 1964 government officials took the final step in a long process issuing a decree ordering immediate expulsion of all missionaries. Missionaries left behind a small number of

⁷⁰ Over time the CMS and Presbyterian missions subcontracted their spheres to other Protestant groups such as Sudan Interior Mission in order to prevent the spread of Catholicism.

⁷¹ S.M. Sid Ahmed, “Christian Missionary Activities in Sudan 1926-1946,” in *Southern Sudan: Regionalism & Religion, Selected Essays*, ed. Mohamed Omer Beshir (Khartoum: Graduate College Publications, 1984), 249. Among southern Sudanese English remains correlated to educational advancement and as a language exerts a small but important influence in the social identification of southern Sudanese with Christianity. As Sachdev and Bourhis note, ‘the association between language and identity depends on the social context pertinent to the language groups in question. Though language can be the most significant criterion of social identification, it is not the only criterial attribute.’ Itesh Sachdev and Richard Y. Bourhis, “Language and Social Identification,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 218. For more on the continuing debate regarding language and education see B. G. V. Nyombe, “Survival or Extinction: The Fate of the Local Languages of the Southern Sudan,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 125 (1997): 99-130.

⁷² Lillian Margaret Passmore Sanderson and G. N. Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899-1964* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), 252. For an overview of resources available on early Nubian Christianity and the Condominium see John Gay Yoh, *Christianity in the Sudan: An Annotated Bibliography* (Amman: Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, 1999); Terje Tvedt, ed., *Southern Sudan: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 573-605.

⁷³ Importantly Beswick notes that contrary to common assumption, “‘Southern Policy’ failed in one of its major objectives: to inhibit further Islamic influence.’ S. F. Beswick, “Islam and the Dinka of the Southern Sudan from the Pre-Colonial Period to Independence (1956),” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 29, no. 3-4 (1994): 174. Beswick believes Islam failed to spread south due to political, economic, cultural and religious rationales determined by southerners themselves rather than the success of the ‘Southern Policy’. Ibid., 175-81.

Sudanese Christians commissioned and entrusted with leadership positions, education opportunities and several translations of the Bible into tribal languages.⁷⁴

Inheriting these humble beginnings Sudanese began proclaiming the gospel themselves. Labouring through the demanding conditions of the first southern civil war Christianity slowly expanded as evangelists spread the gospel. In fact the SCC helped mediate the watershed Addis Ababa Peace Agreement ending civil war in 1972. Growth was perhaps most rapid in the northern church, essentially around greater Khartoum, as it received less direct persecution from the government and saw its congregations swell with internally displaced.⁷⁵ Christian clubs were established targeting southerners living in and around Khartoum throughout the 1970s and 1980s and would play a pivotal role in the recent explosion of Christianity.

Following the end of the civil war the church entered a period of slow and steady internal development largely content to leave governmental interaction to politicians. Building upon its role in the civil war the SCC developed into an important institution active in developmental work across Sudan. Institutions training a new generation of clergy opened, evangelists continued to spread throughout the south and several important youth revivals broke out in southern towns. There were however tensions as churches struggled to transition from fledgling communities entrenched in war ministry to trained and sustainable congregations involved in mainstream society leading to a time of internal conflict and schism.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, in many areas the church ‘was now the most important civil organisation, with more influence among the people than the newly-established government.’⁷⁷ The foundations were laid for the rapid conversion of the southern population and the continued impact of the church at every level of society.

This sense of false security shattered in 1983 with the declaration of *sharia* and descent into a long and ruthless war tragically and irrevocably shaking the very

⁷⁴ One SIM missionary recalled that due to their strict avoidance of politics and the number of women in their group they were given two weeks to depart Sudan. On their given day of departure police arrived with guns on horseback to ensure they left and after the group briefly held hands in a circle and prayed, ‘suddenly and finally the people had to go. The missionaries had to go.’ Pete Ackley, previous missionary of Serving in Mission, expelled from Sudan in 1964, interview with author, 8 January 2007, Dallas.

⁷⁵ Gino Barsella and Miguel A. Ayuso Guixot, *Struggling To Be Heard: The Christian Voice in Independent Sudan, 1956-1996* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 45.

⁷⁶ Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment*, 519.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 497.

foundations of south Sudan.⁷⁸ Isolated and largely forgotten Sudanese Christians again shouldered the burden of war ministry carrying a hope-filled gospel infused with the message of salvation and a holistic social ministry to their suffering communities. Increasingly displaced camps around Khartoum, refugee camps and the southern region as a whole witnessed an acceleration of Christian growth both in terms of numerical statistics and in qualitative socio-political importance. Although statistics are tentative at best, since 1989 the southern population moved from around ten to twenty percent Christian to approximately sixty to seventy percent Christian in less than twenty years, substantially impacting southern Sudan.

Key Terminology

Before proceeding, however, it is important to delineate several key terms, beginning with the term ‘identity.’ The composition of identity results from a complex process incorporating a multiplicity of overlapping biological genetics, values, social processes and historical contexts. Although intensely personal, identity is never individual. This is especially true within holistic cosmologies as evidenced throughout south Sudan. In refugee identity construction, ‘attention turns backward to gather appropriate threads from ethnic heritages, laterally to take stock of their compatriots, and forward to locate possible venues of continuity.’⁷⁹ The thesis follows a definition of identity proffered by Francis Deng, a leading Sudanese scholar:

Identity is seen as a function of how people identify themselves and are identified in race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion and how such identification determines or influences their participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of their country.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ While contemporary northern politicians have insisted on *sharia* as coterminous with the free exercise of their religion southern Sudanese have resisted this effort not primarily on theological grounds but on political rationales as the method of its application by multiple successive northern governments has implied ‘political domination... in the transformation of Sudan into an Islamic state.’ Korwa G. Adar, “Ethno-Religious Nationalism in Sudan: The Enduring Constraint on the Policy of National Identity,” in *Shifting African Identities*, eds. Simon Bekker, Martine Dodds, and Meshack M. Khosa (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 2001), 105.

⁷⁹ Linda A. Camino, “The Dynamics of Cultural Change and Adaptation among Refugees,” in *Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning: Refugee Identity, Gender, and Cultural Change*, eds. Linda A. Camino and Ruth M. Krulfeld (Basel: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994), 2.

⁸⁰ Francis M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict Identities in the Sudan* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 14.

Identity is both descriptive and determinative, and plays a pivotal role at individual, communal and national levels.

This definition should not imply that identity is static. Times of intense stress, fluctuation, loss and insecurity, keenly present throughout the refugee experience accelerate the process of identity change and transformation. Loss, however, does not presume permanency of a vacuum. Rather the refugee experience is a time of rapid transition and adaptation with the resulting transformation both continuous and discontinuous.⁸¹ It is a time of creativity. Identity then is ‘conceptualized less in terms of cultural content *per se* and more in terms of process.’⁸²

Although continuously in a process of reformulation identity development is not automatic. Innovations ‘are usually brought about and through sociopolitical forces or the specific actions of particular individuals which seek to organize and direct such experience.’⁸³ In southern Sudanese refugee and displacement camps Christianity parlayed through indigenous Sudanese churches exerted this force.

In Sudan identity has consistently functioned as an overarching and determinative theme and since 1989 has increasingly crystallised around racial and religious elements leading to a second term, ‘religio-nationalism.’ Religio-nationalism is employed to describe the rationale behind the current civil war as both elements are equally prevalent and cannot be fully disentangled. The central government with its primary political base in the elitist Riverine area surrounding greater Khartoum increasingly utilised fundamentalist Islamic religious ideology as the self-described basis of identity. For many, as the validity of the central government deteriorated and periphery regions fragmented into competing segments,

⁸¹ ‘Often these changes must be made rapidly, leading to attendant difficulties, because they entail important aspects of self-identity and power that affect relations between men and women, those within the family, the workplace, school, and elsewhere.’ Ruth M. Krulfeld, “Changing Concepts of Gender Roles and Identities in Refugee Communities,” in *Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning: Refugee Identity, Gender, and Cultural Change*, eds. Linda A. Camino and Ruth M. Krulfeld (Basel: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994), 71.

⁸² Ruth M. Krulfeld and Linda A. Camino, “Introduction,” in *Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning: Refugee Identity, Gender, and Cultural Change*, eds. Linda A. Camino and Ruth M. Krulfeld (Basel: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994), x.

⁸³ Linda A. Camino, “Refugee Adolescents and Their Changing Identities,” in *Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning: Refugee Identity, Gender, and Cultural Change*, eds. Linda A. Camino and Ruth M. Krulfeld (Switzerland: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994), 29. Here, Camino relies upon Frederick Barth.

legitimacy and national identity became associated with a strict Islamic purity. Seeking external support and augmentation, the government allied itself with Iran hoping to promulgate an 'Islamic revolution in Africa.'⁸⁴ Aspiring to implement the 'revolution' first within Sudan, the government increased targeting and persecution of Christians and the church on primarily religious grounds, declared *jihad* and pursued ethnic cleansing among Nuba Muslims who rejected the militant ideology.⁸⁵ That is, the elite official government continued to induce war with the SPLA primarily on religious grounds.

Inverting this emphasis the Baggara Arabic tribes, the principal members forming the *murharaleen* and primarily located in the Kordofan province north of Bahr el Ghazal and the Upper Nile provinces, appear to primarily rely on an Arabic nationalism in which religious ideology plays an important but secondary role.⁸⁶ Northern tribes regard themselves as culturally and hereditarily 'Arabic' wholly distinct from 'African' tribes located in the south.⁸⁷ Despite syncretic intermingling of familial ties northern identity is self-described as superior to and cleansed of southern impurities. On the basis of an Arabic nationalism historically northern tribes have disdained southern counterparts and correspondingly encouraged southern enslavement.⁸⁸ Raiding *murharaleen* are merely continuing to exert a

⁸⁴ Gabriel R. Warburg, "The Nile Waters, Border Issues and Radical Islam in Egyptian – Sudanese Relations: 1956-1995," in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 87.

⁸⁵ Roger Winter, "The Nuba People: Confronting Cultural Liquidation," in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 183-94. See also Suleiman Musa Rahhal, *The Right to be Nuba: The Story of a Sudanese People's Struggle for Survival* (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2001).

⁸⁶ The Baggara Arabic tribes are nomadic cattle tribes that includes diverse groups such as the Taisha, Beni Helba, Rizeigat and the Humr. For an historic overview see Gunnar Haaland, "Economic Determinants in Ethnic Processes," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrick Barth (Bergen-Oslo: Universitets Forlaget, 1969), 58-73. For more on Baggara approach to cattle Ian Cunnison, *Baggara Arabs: Power and the Lineage in a Sudanese Nomad Tribe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 28-41. The term '*murharaleen*' refers to a loose association of northern individuals who fought on behalf of the Government of Sudan though they were not officially incorporated into the military structure.

⁸⁷ In Sudan Arabic identity is largely based on language and perceived similarity to a broader Middle Eastern region. For more on the influence of language in the development of this consciousness see Mike Holt, "Divided Loyalties: Language and Ethnic Identity in the Arab World," in *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (Richmond Surrey: Curzon, 1996), 11-29.

⁸⁸ For an overview of the contemporary enslavement of southerners, Jok Madut Jok, *War and Slavery in Sudan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Kevin Bales, *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 115-22; for the broader

traditional nationalistic identity over scorned southern tribes. Compounding this traditional identity the second civil war produced significant economic and political motivations. The civil war ‘has often taken the form of local wars in which local issues were involved rather than being simply a war of two armies with national objectives. For some, such as the *murharaleen*, the war has become virtually a business.’⁸⁹ Furthermore some of the *murharaleen* directly stem from a specific alignment with a political faction such as the Umma or NIF.⁹⁰ Thus, for many northern Sudanese the motivation for continued conflict arises out of a complex historical process determined principally by a national or ethnic nationalism.⁹¹

Religio-nationalism seeks to describe a multifaceted civil war furthered on the basis of power identity. For the central government religious ideology is the fundamental element, nationalism secondary, while for Baggara Arab tribes nationalism functions as the central motivation further validated by religious overtures. As Francis Deng notes, ‘religion and race relations are intertwined, since Islam in the Sudan is closely connected with Arabism as a racial, ethnic, and cultural phenomenon.’⁹² For the north religion functions as a fulcrum upon which complex issues of history, politics, economics and racial categories rest making delineation between religious elements and nationalistic impulses impossible.

Although equally complex, southern identity has not been as clearly explored and appears to function as a mirrored inversion. SPLM/A leadership consistently claimed an ideology based purely on secular grounds. While the SPLM/A does not denigrate the role of religion it seeks legitimacy and validity on the basis of secular democratic principles. Seeking to overturn northern domination the SPLM/A attempts to appeal to a third and currently non-existent identity, a secular Sudanese

globalisation of slavery, Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁸⁹ Peter Woodward, “Conflict and Federalism in Sudan,” in *Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa: Federalism and its Alternatives*, eds. Peter Woodward and Murray Forsyth (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1994), 92.

⁹⁰ Alex de Wall, “Some Comments on Militias in the Contemporary Sudan,” in *Civil War in the Sudan*, eds. M.W. Daly and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 143.

⁹¹ Cunnison, for example, argues that among one of the Baggara tribes, the Humr, while Islam is projected as the principle medium, a number of equally important non-Islamic practices and considerations actually influence behaviour, decisions and allegiances. Ian Cunnison, “Blood Money, Vengeance and Joint Responsibility: The Baggara Case,” in *Essays in Sudan Ethnography*, eds. Ian Cunnison and Wendy James (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1972), 105-25.

⁹² Deng, *War of Visions*, 16.

nationalism. As Sharif Harir notes, ‘In the continuous and relentless pursuit of making Sudan an appendage to “something” Arabic, African or Islamic, both elites have failed to build “something” Sudanese as its uniqueness expressed in being Arab and African at the same, required.’⁹³

Within the SPLA Christian religious identity appears to play a more prominent role. Individual members of the SPLA have clearly incorporated Christian elements into their identity as evidenced in the presence of ‘prayer centres’ wherever the military moves.⁹⁴ However it is not clear to what extent Christian identity drives an ideology of armed militancy or merely accompanies the individual throughout the process. Nonetheless, for separate but inverted rationales, from both a northern and southern viewpoint the civil war can be termed as ‘religio-nationalism.’

A third and final term meriting examination is the term ‘refugee.’ As a political designation the term ‘refugee’ was first coined in France in 1573. It developed as a means to grant asylum to Calvinists escaping from the Low Countries. One hundred years later the term was used for the first time in English describing Calvinists forced to flee from France to England in order to avoid religious persecution.⁹⁵ Even at its inception two ongoing elements were recognised in the creation of refugee legality: freedom to express identity, especially when embedded in a minority religious cosmology, and second, the problem of durable integration within the host community. These two elements are especially relevant to the southern Sudanese refugee context.

Today, the designation of refugee status is one of entitlement theoretically securing the individual access to basic humanitarian, political and economic rights. On the basis of national sovereignty local governments are given the prerogative in determining refugee status that is, therefore, in a technical sense necessarily limited

⁹³ Sharif Harir, “Recycling the Past in the Sudan: An Overview of Political Decay,” in *Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of the Sudan*, eds. Sharif Harir and Terje Tvedt (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1994), 10-11.

⁹⁴ Marc R. Nikkel, “The Origins and Development of Christianity,” 322.

⁹⁵ For the historical development of the term ‘refugee,’ Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke and Sergio Aguayo, *Escape From Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5-72.

in its political and legal applicability.⁹⁶ According to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention, the internationally recognised basis for refugee legality, two elements must be satisfied in the determination of refugee status. First, refugees must clearly demonstrate that they, either as an individual or as a group member, were specifically targeted and persecuted by the government.⁹⁷ Second, the individual must cross a recognised international border. Although popular consciousness and mainstream media significantly broaden the term 'refugee' as inclusive of all individuals forced to flee their homes, and although a spirit of humanitarian aid mandates assistance to numerous individuals who either do not qualify as a statutory refugee or have not registered as such, for the purposes of the thesis, the term 'refugee' will apply only to those individuals who fully satisfy the internationally recognised 1951 UN Convention defining refugees as one who:

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.⁹⁸

Although advantageous the 1951 Definition does not recognise individuals who while otherwise satisfying the legal demands of refugee designation remain within their original country without crossing an international border. In practice, however, the UNHCR extends its mandate to encompass these individuals designated as 'Internally Displaced Persons' or IDPs. For the purpose of the thesis IDPs and refugees will be treated as fairly synonymous with appropriate differences noted as necessitated.

The term 'refugee' is loaded with potent political, psychological and sociological meanings extending beyond legal definitions and directly influencing aid distribution and refugee development. Refugees are frequently characterised as

⁹⁶ Ebenezer Q. Blavo, *The Problems of Refugees in Africa: Boundaries and Borders* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 16. Even when nations do extend refugee status it is often done so with reluctance or apprehension: 'the only refugees who are welcome are defectors from those countries which are identified as the enemy.' M. Louise Pirouet, "The Churches and Refugees in Africa," in *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, eds. Christopher Fyfe and Andrew Walls (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1996), 82.

⁹⁷ "The selection of "persecution" as the key operational criterion was in keeping with the desire of the international community to make the status of refugee exceptional, so as to preclude overwhelming numbers.' Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, *Escape From Violence*, 25.

⁹⁸ United Nations, "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees," *United Nations* (28 July 1951) available from http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/o_c_ref.htm; Internet; accessed on 18 July 2005.

helpless and poor needing immediate western expatriate professional assistance. Such an outlook frequently causes NGO workers to overlook social bases of organisation, such as the church, that give meaning and empowerment to refugees. The application of the label refugee can denigrate into a 'process of stereotyping... a vehicle for promoting non-participation and control.'⁹⁹ That is refugees are commonly analysed from an outside, exterior position neglecting internal dynamics and forces of empowerment and transformation.¹⁰⁰ The thesis therefore endeavours to examine the southern Sudanese refugee context from a grassroots, inside-out social identity methodology allowing refugees to delineate their own identity and proffer their own conclusions. In what Jennifer Mason dubs an interpretivist approach, the thesis views 'people as a primary data source, but seeks their perceptions... the "insider view," rather than imposing an "outsider view."'¹⁰¹

An inside-out methodology should not imply that refugees are monolithic. Internal demarcations may be numerous, overlapping and even conflicting. That the refugee experience is widely varied indicates that even within a context of loss and disintegration, individual refugee initiative and internally defined authoritative communal leadership remains the primary modicum in the process of regeneration. Although identity is tied to historical developments and contextual localities the refugee experience appreciates the process of identity change and reformulation. This process is not automatic or pre-defined. It results from validated change agents that initiate growth and trajectory development in a rediscovery of future possibilities, positive self-conceptualisation and group re-identification. From a southern Sudanese refugee perspective the local indigenous church served as an empowerment-generating change interlocutor assisting in communal stabilisation and national resolution.

⁹⁹ Enoch O. Opondo, "Refugee Repatriation in the Horn of Africa: A Contextual Overview of Some Socio-Economic, Legal and Administrative Constraints," in *In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*, ed. Tim Allen (Geneva: UNRISD, 1996), 25.

¹⁰⁰ Refugees are often viewed as a "problem" to be "solved" using pseudo-scientific 'neutral' and equally applicable techniques from an outside-in approach. T. Alexander Aleinikoff, "State-Centered Refugee Law: From Resettlement to Containment," in *Mistrusting Refugees*, eds. E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 257.

¹⁰¹ Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 56.

Chapter Two

Road through Kenya: Heartland for Sudanese Refugees

‘We don’t have pagans in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Those who are pagans, those who are pagans are not here. Since 1992 there was a very great migration from idol worshippers.’

Gabriel Majok¹⁰²

‘In Kakuma here, social life has been enforced by the church.... It is the church that teaches people to live in harmony. If church was not there people could not live well.’

John Garang¹⁰³

Straddling the Sudanese and Kenyan border Lokichogio serves as the initial gateway for most Sudanese seeking refuge. In 1989 when the United Nations chose Lokichogio or simply Loki as the site for one of the world’s largest international relief programmes, Operation Lifeline Sudan, the fortunes of this quiet town changed almost overnight. Today international relief warehouses from the UN to the Red Cross to Voice for the Martyrs stretch along the two roads comprising Loki. Entrepreneurs willing to brave the harsh, hot and windy climate flocked to the town throwing up tin shack buildings masking as restaurants, hotels, barber shops and any number of a variety of sorted goods and accessories. Though the majority of African guides warn the casual traveller to venture nowhere near the outpost, the airport bristles with activity. Daily flights with ALS link Loki to Nairobi and the broader world, and relief planes flying into south Sudan are frequent and numerous.¹⁰⁴

Alongside the relief operation grew another war related economy – military armaments. Purchasing light arms, AK-47s and grenades remains an open

¹⁰² Gabriel Majok, member of ECS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁰³ John Garang, member of ECS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁰⁴ The Aircraft Leasing Services (ALS) of Nairobi’s Wilson Airport is one of the primary commercial operators of daily flights between Nairobi and Lokichogio.

possibility.¹⁰⁵ Simmering underneath the international goodwill veneer lays smouldering ethnic tensions and hostility. Bandits roam the area. Toposa from southern Sudan steal over the mountainous border launching cattle raids on the Turkana armed in part by the Government of Sudan hoping the Toposa would also attack the SPLA.¹⁰⁶ The Turkana, recuperating losses and resentful of the aid faithfully doled to the Sudanese, react in force. It is an area reminiscent of the 'old west,' a frontier town steeped in quick international cash and ready arms dominated by men. For example, in one Presbyterian Church of Sudan service eighty-five were present, nine were women. UN conveys travelling south to Kakuma caravan only in broad daylight and under armed escort. The majority of Sudanese however do not travel in such protected and formal means.

Trekking south for many entails purchasing a ride in one of several *mutatus*, in this case small cars that travel only when filled with five or six passengers. Passing Turkana pastoralists tending their herds of goats and camels the journey curves through several small villages with checkpoints obliging the driver to distribute small amounts of a local narcotic. Costing less than 500 Kenya Shillings the journey takes approximately an hour and a half ending in Kakuma Town, adjacent to the refugee camp, the heartland for Sudanese refugees.

Kakuma Refugee Camp located in the far northwest corner of Kenya is a dry and desolate land in Kenya's largest district, Turkana District.¹⁰⁷ It is an area receiving less than 500mm of rain a year with a 'low potential' for land productivity.¹⁰⁸ In this arid land northwest of Lodwar when rain finally comes between March and May, it falls in torrents flooding the area.¹⁰⁹ Wind whips

¹⁰⁵ Gabriel Meyer, *War and Faith in Sudan* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 101.

¹⁰⁶ Terrace J. McCabe, *Cattle Bring Us to Our Enemies: Turkana Ecology, Politics, and Raiding in a Disequilibrium System* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 90.

¹⁰⁷ For an introduction to the colonial British East Africa's military and administrative oversight in Turkana District see James Barber, *Imperial Frontier: A Study of Relations Between the British and the Pastoral Tribes of North East Uganda* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968). For more recent Kenyan history especially focused on economic development see B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng', eds., *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93* (London: James Currey, 1995).

¹⁰⁸ R. S. Odingo, "Sustainable Agricultural Development in Kenya and Competing Needs for Agricultural Land to the Year 2000 AD," in *Kenya's Population Growth and Development to the Year 2000*, ed. S. H. Ominde (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1988), 68-9.

¹⁰⁹ G. O. Krhoda, "Water Supply in Kenya Today and to the Year 2000 AD," in *Kenya's Population Growth and Development to the Year 2000*, ed. S. H. Ominde (Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1988), 87.

through unbroken, carrying dust and sand that bites into the skin, and is colloquially known as ‘Turkana rains.’¹¹⁰ The district maintains ‘one of the highest levels of insecurity in the country.’¹¹¹ After trudging across south Sudan and through Ethiopian refugee camps, Alephonsion Deng notes the following about his introduction to Kakuma, ‘It was the dirtiest place I’d ever been. When the wind blew, which seemed like all the time, very fine dust was lifted from the dry riverbed and landed in our cooking pots. Half of what we ate was sand.’¹¹²

Approximately sixty-seven thousand Sudanese refugees reside in Kenya.¹¹³ Forty percent of the population is female and fifty-one percent is under the age of eighteen.¹¹⁴ Although Dinka and Nuer comprise the majority of the refugees significant numbers of ethnic minorities originating in eastern Equatoria are also present. One of these minorities, the Pari, supported the SPLA, counterbalancing the prevailing sentiment found throughout Equatoria that resisted SPLA ‘liberation.’¹¹⁵ That is, the majority of the refugees in Kakuma actively supported and validated the SPLM/A. In recent years Kakuma has not been the recipient of massive refugee inflows allowing a semblance of stability and continuity to develop.¹¹⁶ The refugee

¹¹⁰ Jean M. Brainard, *Health and Development in a Rural Kenyan Community* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 18-9.

¹¹¹ Maurice Odhiambo Makoloo, *Kenya: Minorities, Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Diversity* (London: Minority Rights Group, 2005), 15.

¹¹² Benson Deng, Alephonsion Deng and Benjamin Jak, *They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky: The True Story of Three Lost Boys from Sudan* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 238. This notable work is one of the few primary accounts from a southern Sudanese perspective detailing origins of the war, traumatic flights to refuge and conditions within the refugee camps. It is part of a small but growing corpus of important material involving the southern Sudanese experience geared for public appeal. See for example the documentary *POV: Lost Boys of Sudan*, prod. and dir. Megan Mylan and Jon Shenk, 87 mins., New Video Group, 2004, DVD.

¹¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Report 2004 – Kenya,” *UNHCR* (June 2005), 218; available from www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=42ad4da27&page=home; Internet; accessed on 16 June 2005. Sudanese refugees are accepted on the principle of mass status determination, a principle accepted by the donor community in the ‘poor third world countries of asylum [while] they themselves stick to the procedure of individual determination.’ Gaim Kibreab, “The African Refugee Regime with Emphasis on Northeastern Africa: The Emerging Issues,” in *Legitimate and Illegitimate Discrimination: New Issues in Migration*, ed. Howard Adelman (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1995), 89.

¹¹⁴ “UNHCR Global Report 2004 – Kenya,” 218.

¹¹⁵ Eisei Kurimoto, “Civil War & Regional Conflicts: The Pari & their Neighbours in South-eastern Sudan,” in *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (London: James Currey, 1994), 95-111; Eisei Kurimoto, “Resonance of Age-Systems in Southeastern Sudan,” in *Conflict, Age & Power in North East Africa: Age Systems in Transition*, eds. Eisei Kurimoto and Simon Simonse (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 29-50.

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, “Global Report 2004 – Kenya,” 217.

population primarily derives from areas historically connected with the CMS and the Presbyterian Church (USA), today known as the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) and the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) respectively.

Founded in 1992 with the sudden influx of thousands of Sudanese ‘lost boys’ Kakuma I is constructed along a basic spatial pattern. The UNHCR compound is currently located outside of the immediate camp close to the edge of Kakuma Town and on the opposite side of the main north-south tarmac road that divides the area. Walking from Kakuma Town to the edge of the refugee camp takes around thirty minutes though many prefer to pay the small fee to ride on the back of one of the ubiquitous bicycles that form the main mode of transportation.

At the southern end of the camp lies the large Lutheran World Federation (LWF) compound. LWF is the lead agency distributing food and facilitating security and social services.¹¹⁷ The World Food Programme (WFP) provides the food itself. The majority of the other NGOs involved in Kakuma such as the International Rescue Committee and the Jesuit Refugee Service maintain offices and personnel in this compound. It is the hub of administration and social services.

Proceeding out of the LWF compound and roughly stretching north following a dry riverbed to the east is Kakuma I broken into five zones. One long dirt road stretches the length of the camp, though with the high wind parts of the road bog down to dense sand, making travel either by foot or bicycle tedious and tiring. Travelling from the LWF compound to the farthest northern point in Zone 3 would take approximately one hour and a half by foot, forty-five minutes by bicycle.

Zone 5 is nearest to LWF and is predominately assigned to the Nuer who comprise the second largest ethnic group both within southern Sudan and within Kakuma. Moving north from Zone 5 and remaining on the eastern side of the main road one first reaches Zone 4 assigned to Ethiopian refugees and then Zone 3 and the Dinka, the largest single ethnicity in Sudan and in Kakuma. Zone 5 and Zone 3 are the farthest apart along the north-south corridor. Proceeding north again from Zone 5 but situated on the western side of the main road is first Zone 2 allocated to Somalis and then Zone 1 containing individuals predominately from eastern Equatoria. These directions are approximate as zones are not clearly defined often

¹¹⁷ Guglielmo Verdirame, “Human Rights and Refugees: The Case of Kenya,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12, no. 1 (1999): 62.

bleeding and overlapping into each other. Furthermore Kakuma was not planned along a succinct design but enlarged out of necessity. When Kakuma I overcrowded, Kakuma II was constructed on the outskirts of Kakuma I and eventually a third site called Kakuma III was erected. However, as the majority of the refugees reside in Kakuma I and it forms the backbone of the refugee camp economy and society, field research focused on this area. The following is a non-proportional simplistic diagram outlining the camp and locating the primary churches:

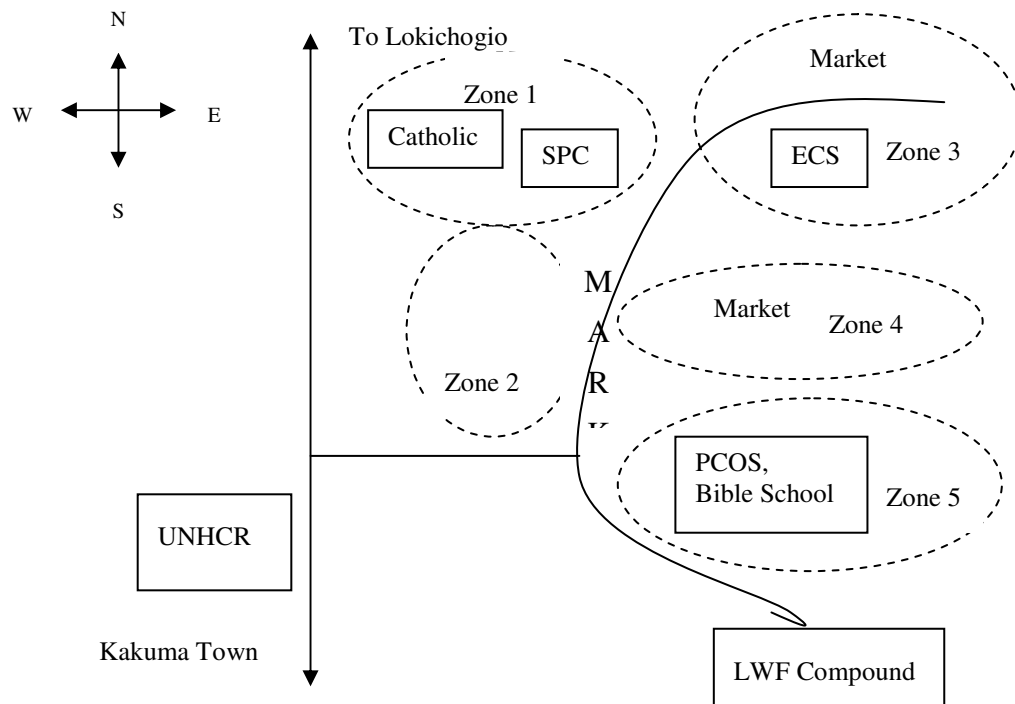


Figure 3 – Kakuma I Refugee Camp Diagram

Compounds are fenced with high thorn bushes separating them. It is the responsibility of each family to construct their own home or *tukul*, though a tin roof is supplied. Numerous small footpaths criss-cross through the zones intersecting and forming a network for ease of travel. The UNHCR provides water boreholes in each zone to be shared by the residing population. Spread throughout the camp are educational centres and even a hospital.

While Kakuma has developed a semblance of permanence and urbanisation, life is harsh and difficult for a variety of important reasons.¹¹⁸ First, refugees

¹¹⁸ Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos and Peter Kagwanja argue that camps such as Kakuma and Dadaab in Kenya produce refugees who are “urban dwellers in the making.” Marc-Antoine Perouse

experience a significant lack of basic resources, particularly food and water. The majority of refugees are completely dependent upon rations they receive from WFP. Unfortunately, UNHCR and sub-contractors in Kakuma have experienced significant financial shortfalls in recent years.¹¹⁹ As one example of difficulties related to food provision, a WFP Executive Board Annual Session in 2005 noted that acute malnutrition in Kakuma remained at nine percent and that in 2003 the International Rescue Committee had reported that ninety-five percent of all children were anaemic.¹²⁰ In addition to the problem of food quantity and nutritional value are dietary cultural preferences. Traditional Sudanese diet does not incorporate the wheat flour provided by the WFP. In order to compensate refugees sell a proportion of their rations ‘in order to buy millet, sorghum, maize flour and cassava flour’ in addition to other basic goods such as sugar or soap.¹²¹ Writing about his experience in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Benson Deng laments:

We were human beings, not donkeys, and couldn’t chew the damn hard dry corn grains every day. It made our teeth strong, we needed no dentist, but our stomachs and our intestines became infected. Many people died of stomach problems. The corn needed grinding so we collected our ration together and sold some to pay to grind the remaining grain. Sometimes we stood three days in a line in the local town waiting for the grinding machine. Other times when people went to the market to sell some of their grain in order to get money to grind the rest, gangs robbed them of it all. If you were robbed, you went back to the camp weeping for the fact that war in your land had driven you to this arid part of northern Kenya, where the starved local inhabitants were as ravenous as wolves.¹²²

Water is also a source of concern and insecurity. Turkana District is plagued by droughts and there are frequent water shortages in the refugee camp. The water shortage is perhaps most keenly felt among the Nuer in Zone 5. When visited in 2006 water was only available an hour and a half to two hours each day where previously it had been available three times a day for half an hour to two hours each

de Montclos and Peter Mwangi Kagwanja, “Refugee Camps or Cities? The Socio-economic Dynamics of the Dadaab and Kakuma Camps in Northern Kenya,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 13, no 2 (2000): 206.

¹¹⁹ Despite budgetary shortfalls Kakuma receives considerably more funding than other Kenyan refugee camps, such as Dadaab, the primary site of Somali refugees in Kenya. Cindy Horst, *Transnational Nomads: How Somalis Cope with Refugee Life in the Dadaab Camp of Kenya* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 109-10.

¹²⁰ “Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation – Kenya 10258.1” Executive Board Annual Session Rome 6 – 10 2005, agenda item 9. Compiled 20 April 2005. Accessed via: <http://www.wfp.org/eb/docs/2005/wfp050964~1.pdf> on 20 November 2006, 5, paragraphs 8 and 9.

¹²¹ De Montclos and Kagwanja, 217.

¹²² Deng, Deng and Jak, *They Poured Fire on Us*, 265.

time.¹²³ Hilda, the Women's Department Leader for the Community Department of the LWF explained that the problem with water in Zone 5 directly results from overcrowding by the Nuer. She insisted that new Nuer arrivals refusing settlement in Kakuma II or III have pushed the capacity of Zone 5 over the infrastructure limits built for that community. In her opinion the problem therefore was beyond LWF and rests solely with the Nuer themselves.¹²⁴ Rev Tut Mai, a Nuer residing in Zone 5, agreed that the basic problem was overcrowding but that the responsibility for alleviating the situation was not resettlement of Nuer but an increase in security arrangements by the LWF. He noted that during previous ethnic tensions in Kakuma the LWF was unable to protect the minority Nuer from the Dinka. The Nuer decided to band together to bolster their numbers and protect themselves. Though these conflicts have since dissipated Nuer are hesitant to leave homes they have already built with their own resources.¹²⁵ While both agree that water shortage is problematic and relates to overcrowding, the above highlights the disparity that can exist between NGO staff and refugees. Furthermore as NGOs maintain control over camp funding and mechanisms it illustrates how the onus of responsibility can be shifted to dis-empowered refugees exacerbating already difficult situations.¹²⁶ Nuers respond by utilising boreholes in neighbouring zones or by buying or bartering for water from host Turkana. Rather than decreasing insecurity however, this response increases conflict by generating friction with nearby refugees, in this case usually Somalis, provoking individual fights at the water-tap or further depleting the limited economic base for Nuer.

Economic opportunities do exist however in Kakuma. There are multiple markets spread throughout the camp plying assorted goods and services, the smallest being among the Nuer in Zone 5. The largest and most dynamic are in Zones 2 and 4 among the Somali and the Ethiopians. Within these markets are restaurants, hotels, businesses focusing on computer training, internet cafes and small movie theatres

¹²³ Tut Mai, pastor of PCOS and staff of Mobile Bible School, interview with author, 10 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹²⁴ Hilda, women's department leader for the community department of the LWF, interview with author, 9 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹²⁵ Tut Mai, interview with author, 10 February 2006.

¹²⁶ Admittedly, 'aid organizations also face tradeoffs between competing principles' and realities within the camp that force compromises. Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 20.

featuring an assorted mixture of old movies often involving fighting motifs. The Somali market situated on the main Kakuma thoroughfare remains active throughout the day contributing to a vibrant atmosphere of intermingling cultures and ethnicities. Important football matches from the Africa Cup of Nations to Manchester and Arsenal are advertised drawing male-dominated crowds late into the evening. The Dinka market in Zone 3, perhaps because of its distance from the others, has also developed into a small but respectable area of commerce. Contributing to the economic buoyancy of Kakuma are the small salaries paid to refugees employed by the numerous NGOs and money received from family members living abroad. Nonetheless, for the majority of Sudanese refugees, life in Kakuma is equated with financial instability and a lack of food and water resources.

A second difficulty arising out of life in Kakuma is an undercurrent tension between refugees and the host Turkana population. Kenyan policy mandates that refugees remain within the camp perimeters unless prior written permission is granted. Such permission is difficult to achieve although Sudanese frequently travel to Lokichogio, south Sudan or even Nairobi. UNHCR policy dictates that Turkana remain outside of the camp lest they become recipients of the scarce resources. As already noted however Turkana are among the poorest in Kenya. For example, fifty-nine percent of Turkana do not have access to clean water and seventy-five percent do not have access to basic healthcare institutions.¹²⁷ Ironically Turkana frequently find themselves socio-economically below the refugee population for whom food, healthcare and education is provided. Turkana have in part responded through economic initiatives such as gathering and selling the thorn bushes used by Sudanese to fence their compounds. Many simply resort to begging. The effect is the creation of a host population dependent upon the maintenance of the refugee community that many Turkana resent. Subsistence has continued to increase as Turkana are migrating to Kakuma in large numbers in hope of receiving aid, employment and opportunity.

While major conflict between Turkana and Sudanese, who share no kinship links, has thus far been abated, resentment is manifested in attitudes, perceptions, judgements, petty theft and an air of tension.¹²⁸ This is particularly true among the

¹²⁷ "Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation – Kenya 10258.1," page 4, paragraph 3.

¹²⁸ Jeff Crisp, "A State of Insecurity: The Political Economy of Violence in Kenya's Refugee Camps," *African Affairs* 99 (October 2000): 610-11.

Dinka in Zones 1 and 3 who exhibit hostility and suspicion towards Turkana, and at night, even fear. Dinka comment that they must carefully lock their compounds at night lest the Turkana come and raid their homes. Interestingly, Turkana are reported to have the same fear of the Dinka.¹²⁹

Importantly this fear does not exist between Turkana and Nuer who have frequent and more open contact with each other. On occasion Turkana can even be found sleeping on the ground in Zone 5. Furthermore, a small group of Turkana daily wait outside of the Mobile Bible School (MBS) at the PCOS compound in Zone 5 for foodstuffs and handouts. However, the underlying resentment of preference shown to refugees, begging conditions and fear of theft or bodily harm contributes to a sense of insecurity in the camp.

A third difficulty in Kakuma relates to the internal problems of normal life. 'Youths' were frequently cited as a major source of conflict in the community for a variety of different reasons such as disrespect and not honouring the elders. Adultery, rape and theft are also present. Problems regarding employment and educational advancement were also frequently cited as was concern about the situation in Sudan and other refugee camps.

Likewise, women in Kakuma experience many of the same difficulties they faced in southern Sudan. Teresa Bul Chan, the Chair Lady for the Nuer community explained, 'the concept of the Sudanese people is to look down on the women... She can't have any authority in the community. And she cannot contribute in the social affairs where the men are contributing the good ideas.'¹³⁰ Another lamented:

The way we are here as the women we don't have way to raise up, to come up to comparative with others so that is why you see we get the interpreter. If not we could communicate with you by our own. But because we are beat down, beat down that is why we get the interpreter. And especially we the women of southern Sudan and so we are the same as when we came [from] back home. We did not change... It is a big challenge, a big problem for all the women to come up.'¹³¹

Pili Martin, the LWF Peace, Conflict and Reconciliation Programme Officer noted:

¹²⁹ John Lamphear notes that much of Turkana's current poverty and reputation for hostility stems from misguided perceptions and actions initiated under British colonialists and disingenuously continued in recent history, John Lamphear, *The Scattering Time: Turkana Responses to Colonial Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

¹³⁰ Teresa Bul Chan, chair lady of Nuer community, interview with author, 10 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹³¹ Mary Akop Acher, member of PCOS, interview with author, 15 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

We have women who have suffered a lot... You see you have women who might have been raped by SPLA soldiers and they had kids in the process and these men are looking for these children. Already this person who has suffered trouble, then they want to take the child away but they don't want the woman, they want the child you see. Then such a person, the woman needs help. Then we take them to [Jesuit Refugee Service], they come and have a place there and they keep the women isolated from the community until they think that they are better and they assist them.¹³²

A fourth difficulty facing Sudanese is tension with other nationalities in Kakuma. This is sometimes expressed in religious annoyance. For example, the Presbyterian Church of Sudan begins beating the drum calling people to worship very early on Sunday mornings. When Nuer were asked how they believed the nearby Somalis felt about this ritual, they responded with indifference citing the nightly call to prayer as a source of irritation and disruption.

A more substantial source of tension relates to intermarriage. Pili Martin observed:

Our main aim is to try and create a peaceful existence among the refugee population itself and also between the refugees and the host community because there is a lot of interaction that takes place. Even sometimes you will realise there is even some intermarriages. So it brings a lot of, if you want, tension, yeah, especially issues of marriages [and] dowry.¹³³

Issues such as intermarriage raise difficult questions regarding legal and cultural jurisdiction. In Kenya, refugee camps are in general legal anomalies that are 'in practice – albeit certainly not in theory – beyond the scope of national law and subjected to an informal legal system established by the agencies that run them.'¹³⁴ In Kakuma, jurisdiction to a large extent has been devolved to community based bench courts or peace committees that have a remit related only to their respective community. Intermarriage crosses the common process of deliberation. In such instances pastors and community leaders will consult with their counterparts a negotiated settlement to maintain communal peace. When crossing ethnic and religious boundaries, however, this process can be difficult placing further strain on cultural values.

A fifth and final source of insecurity is conflict among Sudanese themselves. This provided the greatest threat to stability particularly between Dinka and Nuer. Traditionally these two communities viewed each other with hostility resulting in

¹³² Pili Martin, peace, conflict and reconciliation programme officer of the LWF, interview with author, 7 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Verdirame, "Human Rights and Refugees: The Case of Kenya," 55.

frequent clashes and cattle raids. This history and attitude was transferred to Kakuma. Enhancing the precarious situation, news of conflict occurring in south Sudan would be carried to Kakuma with the encouragement to take revenge. On multiple occasions armed conflict between Sudanese groups or within one group erupted. For example, 1997 saw two major escalations rendering more than one hundred forty casualties and over one hundred injuries. Again, January 1999 witnessed three hundred injuries and four hundred houses razed.¹³⁵

Although armed battles have recently decreased, suspicion still remains. Returning from a meeting one evening a Dinka companion insisted that we travel on a *bora-bora*, or bicycle, rather than walking because it was ‘dangerous.’ A one-word response was given to why he felt it was dangerous to return by foot at night: ‘Nuer.’¹³⁶

In this context of urbanisation and ongoing insecurity, instability and uncertainty southern Sudanese have engaged in a process of communal group re-identification and re-formation of normative social values and mores with one indigenous agent surfacing as the foremost interlocutor, Sudanese churches. Though a number of churches and denominations exist within the camp, as refugees are given the freedom to form spiritual associations in accordance with their resources, there are four predominant denominations within Kakuma: the Presbyterian Church of Sudan among the Nuer, the Episcopal Church of Sudan among the Dinka, the Catholic Church among the Equatorians and several smaller ethnically mixed Sudan Pentecostal Churches. Taken as a whole these churches have communally benefited Kakuma Refugee Camp by recreating societal patterns of interaction, building bridges of ethnic peace and reconciliation and modelling several progressive social initiatives. The remainder of this chapter will explore these three key areas detailing the collective influence of the churches on the communal stabilisation of Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹³⁵ Crisp, “A State of Insecurity,” 608.

¹³⁶ James, school teacher and member of ECS, interview with author, 6 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Recreating Society

The first communally stabilising influence the churches collectively exerted on Kakuma was a substantiated reconstruction of society thereby adding a sense of stability stripped during war and refuge. Social elements associated with traditional Sudanese society have been reconfigured in the church setting. This is simplistically demonstrated in the congregational arrangement of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan during a Sunday morning service. Figure Four depicts the primary PCOS church



Figure 4 - PCOS Church in Zone 5, Kakuma

located among the Nuer in Zone 5. Although this is a fairly typical example of a church building in Kakuma, it is important to note that the church outgrew this particular building and now meet outdoors with the aid of a simple but effective sound system. In order to avoid the heat and dust service normally begins at 7:15 am and is over by

10:00 am. This is a large congregation and on this particular morning there were 909 adults and 655 children for a total of 1,564.

During a service the worship Chairman sits to the front and the middle with the ‘Ruling Elder’ of the church seated by himself behind and to the left of the Chairman. The Choir, composed entirely of youth wearing orange vests, sits on the right side of the congregation with the important men of the church situated on the first few rows on the left side of the congregation. Behind these selected men are the members of the Women’s Union, all of whom wear a blue vestment. Only after these groups is the rest of the congregation permitted to sit.

Importantly the Choir is associated with the Children’s Sunday School and on Fridays they have a joint meeting.¹³⁷ Notice in Figure Five that the Choir is seated to the right and the Sunday School to the left divided into appropriate age groups called Groups A, B, C and D with different vests for the different groups. Group D is three

¹³⁷ The following is based on Peter Ngong Lam, Sunday School director of PCOS, interview with author, 3 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

to four years old, C is five to six, B is six to nine and A is ten to fourteen. The teacher or leader for each group wears a white vest or crimson sash. From the age of sixteen to twenty-five one is considered a youth and therefore a choir member. Only after one has reached the age of twenty-five can one be considered an adult and a full member of the congregation. Promotion from one group level to the next involves a full day celebration



Figure 5 - PCOS Sunday School and Choir Meeting

incorporating games, refreshment and a time of prayer by the pastors for each one being promoted. One final note concerning the choir is their entrance into the service. They process in together and before sitting, or later standing, first kneel to the ground in unison in a set way taught to them by the Choir Leader.

In Kakuma Refugee Camp traditional societal arrangements are not feasible and have consequently broken down. This has enabled significant parallels to develop between the church arrangement and age division in traditional Nuer society, though important differences exist. As in traditional society individuals are assigned to an age bracket with proscribed behaviours and activities. In both obedience and respect is key. Traditionally youth were involved in two principal activities: tending the cattle and composing public songs. While refuge has made obsolete tending the cattle, the church has continued the significance of set-apart public singing by youth. In traditional society and the contemporary church environment both, it is only the youth that are set-aside solely for the purpose of public singing. Furthermore, according to a Nuer judge in Kakuma, the traditional initiation process is now illegal.¹³⁸ This process involving guidance and commissioning by the community elders is recreated in the promotion services though to a lesser degree and without physical marking. While the Sunday School–Choir–Member schema can be viewed

¹³⁸ Kerbina Dul Myon, head chief of the Nuer court, interview with author, 14 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp. Importantly this decision was not reached primarily on religious grounds but on issues of equality and modern perceptions of education, development and competition as stated succinctly, ‘but when you look around the world the marks are not there.’ Ibid.

as a form of the age-set system, it is certainly a modification and not a direct re-creation rigidly maintained. Nonetheless, it is viewed as the ‘normal’ procedure to full church membership and in a setting where all other forms of the age-set has been removed or even criminalised this arrangement takes on an added value and significance that it might not have otherwise been accorded.

Highlighting the similarity in expectation and the importance of maintaining selected elements from traditional society in the Sunday School–Choir composition is the following sermon given to the Sunday School and Choir during one weekly meeting. James Bany Daa a lay member of the congregation delivered the sermon, which was simultaneously translated by John Riak:

If you don’t obey the Lord you will be destroyed. If you don’t obey God then how can we be freed from all these things disturbing us, but the Lord is listening to those who talk to him in faith.

Wisdom begins with listening to mother and father. This will teach you how to listen to the Lord. Children should follow all the traditions of the culture, such as handling the cattle, to prove you are a worthy listener and one who is worthy of service. This is so when you go to the Lord He will see you are worthy.

Since our relatives know we are Christians and taught God’s word what are we proving to them by our actions? We should prove we are Christians. We should avoid outside influences, not listen to those who cheat people. Let us look to the Lord, trust Him and let Him guide us in every situation we are in.

Let our patience stand that we may reach the promise at the end. Let us seek not the wisdom of the world but the wisdom of God who will show us the clear way. The way of the Christian does not make sense to the non-Christian. So let us be a wise example of the right way and be recognised by the people. God loves us. That is why He gave us His son. The Christian way is different from the traditional witchcraft way of dealing with problems. We have left that way.¹³⁹

Although brief this sermon reinforces respect for elders, maintaining traditional values and culture, a theology articulated in lifestyle rather than doctrine and the primacy of Christianity over traditional religion. The Sunday School–Choir paradigm, moreover, demonstrates that a collective social identity is considered important to the PCOS. More important than it would perhaps be in other southern Sudanese contexts, in Kakuma the church is almost alone in providing a social basis for collective identification organised and administrated by the Sudanese themselves. Within the refugee camp church participation exposes children to traditional values and norms beyond the extended family at a time when at a developmental level, ‘collective identities may become quite significant to children’s self-concept...

¹³⁹ James Bany Daa, lay member of PCOS, recorded by author, 3 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

particularly in an environment where a social category membership is salient.’¹⁴⁰
The overall effect therefore is to reinforce and solidify an emerging group
categorisation.

The Sunday School and Choir form only one component to a church service seeking to incorporate communal groups and ideals first seen in the physical seating arrangements of the service. The Women’s Union also forms a distinct communal identity within the service. On Wednesdays, the Women’s Union gathers together in its own compound which neighbours the PCOS compound. While all women are invited to attend this meeting, and many regularly do, only a handful of women are official members of the Women’s Union, identifiable by the blue uniform that they



Figure 6 - Women's Union Gathering Tithes

wear. The Women’s Union has a variety of responsibilities in the broader church community often reflecting their duties and tasks within society. The Women’s Union are to help prepare the church for worship on Sunday mornings, lead Bible Studies and worship at their weekly meetings, visit the sick in the church and community and most visibly, gather the tithes

during morning worship, as seen in Figure Six. This group plays a distinct and important role in a community seeking inclusion, holism and contribution from a variety of groups each assigned specific tasks.

The PCOS’ efforts to constitute an important and vibrant community that recognises a variety of identifiable groups each playing an important role that contributes to a broader setting is underlined during group worship. During worship each group is allowed to present a special song to the rest of the congregation. While

¹⁴⁰ Diane N. Ruble, Jeannette Alvarez, Meredith Bachman, Jessica Cameron, Andrew Fuligni, Cynthia Garcia Coll and Eun Rhee, “The Development of a Sense of “We”: The Emergence and Implications of Children’s Collective Identity,” in *The Development of the Social Self*, eds. Mark Bennett and Fabio Sani (Hove: Psychology Press, 2004), 33-4.

this song can be a hymn frequently it is an original composition. The Chairman of the Service will ask the Choir, Women's Union, men and sometimes children if they have a song they would like to present to the congregation. At the PCOS service in Lokichogio this practice is extended in a unique and important way. Due to working conditions women and therefore children are present only in a limited capacity. Rather than asking the Choir, Women's Union or children to present a song therefore, the Chairman asks if those of Nuer, Dinka, Anyuak, or Murle would like to present a group song. Congregations are not therefore viewed as a unified block but as the commensurate sum of all the various sub-groups each assigned a specific role, seating position and task and it is only when each group is actively participating in its proper way that worship can be considered conducted.

Further underscoring this sentiment one pastor noted, 'without choir the church cannot be the church. Without women's group the church cannot be the church. Without Sunday School it cannot be the church. Without all co-operation it means that it cannot be the real church. With participation, they bring together, [then] it is where the prayer will be seen.'¹⁴¹ Giving space for public participation during worship services to each group – male elders, women and youth within the proper seating arrangement – allows an assertion of independence by each group reflecting a traditional Nuer thought that appropriate collectivity is on the basis of composite pieces performing their autonomous function within a holistic framework.

A final note regarding the service itself and highlighting the importance of communal greeting is the normal pattern of dismissal. Although this practice is not carried out following the main service due to the size of the congregation it is maintained in other settings and at all of the other PCOS congregations visited. As evidenced in Figure Seven each member



Figure 7 - PCOS Greeting Line

¹⁴¹ Peter Kai Nyon, pastor of PCOS, interview with author, 6 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

processes through the greeting line and then joins the end so that everyone present is acknowledged and communal group identification strengthened.

Within such an environment leadership hierarchies are demarcated and maintained. This is especially clear in the relationship between the Ruling Elder and the Teaching Elder. John Riak commented on the primary qualification to become a Ruling Elder, 'the congregation proposes the elder. When the elder should be the elder but not a young man like me. Like I was about to be proposed as the elder but the church say, no, John should not be the elder but he should be an evangelist as well. He should teach. But elder is a high one. That is why you see, the elder is an old man.'¹⁴² The Ruling Elder therefore, is expected to be a respected older gentleman who advises the pastor, offers practical wisdom to communicants and guides the activities of the congregation. The Ruling Elder, furthermore, balances the activities of the Teaching Elder, or pastor, who is considered a specialist with a primarily spiritual purview and ability to help others navigate their spiritual relationship with God.

The sense of community belonging, necessary group participation and the importance of living according to established cultural norms is reflected in local theology. When asked what was central to his congregation's faith, Rev Peter Kai responded, 'The centre, the central faith is when you pray together as a people. When you share together as a people. It is the one thing... And the other thing is when you follow the 10 Commandments.'¹⁴³

Such an understanding of the role of the church is not limited to the Presbyterian Church alone but is comparable to other churches in Kakuma. This view is also clearly discernable at the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS) in Zone 3



Figure 8 - ECS Church in Zone 3, Kakuma

¹⁴² John Riak, evangelist and church secretary of PCOS, interview with author, 5 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁴³ Peter Kai Nyon, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

among the Dinka. This church is also rather large as demonstrated by Figure Eight. As in the Presbyterian Church, the ECS also extends traditional practices into the



Figure 9 – ECS High Deacon Samuel Deng with Personalised Cross

worship service. A prime example is the use of ‘crosses’ during worship. Traditionally Dinka spent considerable time carving and crafting walking sticks used in a variety of settings. Today this practice has been transferred to the creation of ornate crosses carried while walking and waved during worship. Paralleling customary practice, the most elderly men and women publicly engage in this activity. When one group of young people were asked why only senior men and women carried the crosses they looked askance and responded most obviously, because that is the way it is. Some young people are pleased with this change in practice. One young man noted that formerly old men would carry sticks and hit

younger individuals when they misbehaved. Currently however, when some older men go to hit you with their cross, they see it and stop.¹⁴⁴

Like the PCOS, the ECS also reflects an important deference to church hierarchies. This was clearly illustrated when attempting to arrange an interview and focus group at the church in Zone 3. One morning I travelled to the church and finding individuals at the compound asked to see the pastor explaining why I had come and what I was hoping to achieve. The attendant at the church agreed that it would be best for me to consult the pastor before proceeding further. After waiting for several hours in a nearby shop I was informed that the pastor had arrived and was available to receive me. I repeated to the pastor the reasons why I had come to Kakuma Refugee Camp and to his church in particular. I asked him if it would be possible to interview him and arrange a focus group with some of the members of his congregation. He informed me that he felt that my project and reason for coming to Kakuma was good and beneficial and that he would like to arrange these interviews but would not be able to do so without further permission from the Deacons who

¹⁴⁴ William Geit, member of ECS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

oversee all of the churches in Kakuma. Fortunately the three deacons were gathering together that afternoon so at the appropriate time I returned and repeated the outline of the project to the Deacons. The Deacons likewise affirmed the project and agreed to arrange an interview to take place several days later with the ECS church leadership in Kakuma subject to approval from the High Deacon.¹⁴⁵ On the appointed day the interview could not begin until after the project had again been outlined and the High Deacon satisfied. Throughout the interview the High Deacon, also the most senior adult male present, was given opportunity to speak first and when others disagreed with him they did so discreetly.

Confirming that the ECS also views proper behaviour and group contribution during the worship service as central, the High Deacon responded to what he considered the most important element of worship on a Sunday morning: 'When the congregation are gathered in the church we see that everybody is obey[ing] the things... that the church [requires]... After that we have to see that the whole prayers is being organised. And after that we know that the Holy Spirit is among the congregation.'¹⁴⁶ Another lay leader asserted, 'so as a leader in the church our mission is to control people in the church. If anyone who does wrong you have to correct him or her in a polite way.'¹⁴⁷ Underlying this sentiment is a traditional Dinka approach to collectivity that is 'closely linked with the position and authority of fathers, elders, and priests.'¹⁴⁸ That is whereas Nuer approach group identity, as exhibited in the PCOS, based on a segmentary principle of independent parts performing in cohesion, Dinka collectivity emphasises common adherence to rules and forms set and maintained by the leading elders. The net result for the ECS is a more corporately articulated theology that continues to maintain traditional practices within ongoing group categorisation.

Unique to the ECS and important in expanding ideal corporate patterns and directly stemming from a common adherence to determined norms is the practice of

¹⁴⁵ In Kakuma the High Deacon is the senior ECS ecclesiastical office with pastoral and administrative responsibility for the three Kakuma Deacons and the various ECS pastors and church leaders in the camp.

¹⁴⁶ Samuel Deng, High Deacon of ECS, interview with author, 6 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁴⁷ Paul Madat, member of ECS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁴⁸ Michael E. Meeker, *The Pastoral Son and the Spirit of Patriarchy: Religion, Society, and Person among East African Stock Keepers* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 95.

‘Bible Study Fellowships’ and ‘synagogues.’ In addition to Sunday morning worship adult members of the congregation are to join small Bible Study groups and children and youth corresponding synagogues that are spread geographically throughout the camp. These meetings, which are to last approximately one hour, meet every evening before dusk and are typically comprised of around forty individuals.¹⁴⁹ Although pastors are present at the Bible Studies different members of the group, male and female, are given the opportunity to share the Bible Study time rotating around so that everyone has the opportunity to lead. These daily meetings allow pastors to remain closely attuned to issues arising in the community and respond quickly to individual and communal needs.¹⁵⁰

Synagogues, solely for youth and children, primarily focus on transmitting Christian songs and end with a short Biblical reading. Though songs do not figure as predominantly in the ECS worship service as they do in the PCOS service, they do form an important medium for training and shaping, and ECS Bor Dinka have composed more than 1,000 new songs while at Kakuma.¹⁵¹ This difference in practice may stem in part from a traditional Dinka understanding that for youth songs are more connected to socially appropriate methods of expressing individuality and social tension.¹⁵² Nonetheless, both the fellowships and the synagogues play an important role in inculcating corporate identity and behavioural practice on the basis of common norms.

The importance of recognising and establishing children under the proper community authority is further demonstrated in the ECS worship service. Every Sunday morning immediately following the Biblical readings and church announcements is a baby dedication. Holding their infants, women come to the front of the congregation and kneel before the stage. The fathers who are seated on the opposite side of the congregation then come and stand behind them. The child is then passed to that day’s preacher who proceeds to the back of the stage, turns his

¹⁴⁹ For example during one Bible Study attended by the author on 16 February 2006, 22 women and 16 men were present.

¹⁵⁰ Abraham Achuth, deacon of ECS, interview with author, 6 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁵¹ Marc Nikkel, “ECS Worship and Music: Isolation and Innovation,” in *“But God is Not Defeated!” Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 147.

¹⁵² See Meeker, *The Pastoral Son and the Spirit of Patriarchy*, 15-26.

back on the congregation, faces the east and then prays into a microphone for that child and family. This process is repeated for each child initiating the infant into a broader social context marked by proper relationship with individuals and with God. The construction of ECS churches in conjunction with key pastoral turns to face the east reflects in part a traditional Dinka understanding of where life originates.¹⁵³

An important church celebration further demonstrated the efforts of the ECS to recreate traditional elements and reinforce communal identification and group ideals. The ECS recently celebrated the centennial anniversary of the arrival of the first missionary, Archibald Shaw.¹⁵⁴ The ECS congregations in Kakuma had sent a delegation to the celebrations occurring in Malek. On 13 February the delegation returned to Kakuma. Upon their arrival they marched down the main road the length of the camp with many in the community flocking to the road to see the activity that was transpiring. The parade ending at the church in Zone 3 was greeted with warm enthusiasm, dancing and singing. A number of important symbols were used during the celebration as is evidenced in figures ten through thirteen. There was much dancing involving jumping and running backwards and forwards. Drums and horns were used for music as were shakers attached to the feet. I was told quite explicitly that the group sent to Malek were those who were trained in the way of traditional dancing.

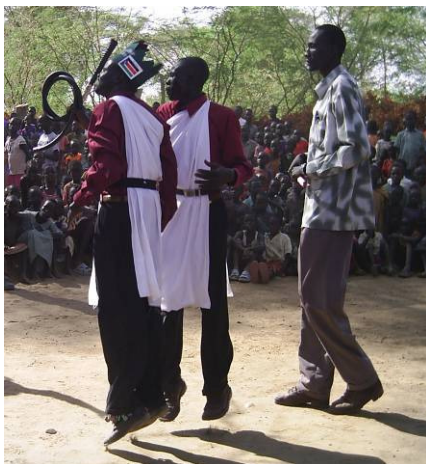


Figure 10 - ECS Centenary Celebration



Figure 11 - ECS Centenary Parade

¹⁵³ Blurring the death-life boundaries, formerly in death, 'before the body stiffens, it is made to lie on the right side, the limbs are bent and the hands are placed under the head as in a sleeping position.' Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka of the Sudan* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1984), 131.

¹⁵⁴ Given the 'ox name' Machuor, Shaw has been embraced by the ECS as the 'founding father of their Christian faith.' Marc Nikkel, "Archibald Shaw 'Machuor': 'The Only White Man with the



Figure 12 – ECS Centenary Banner



Figure 13 – ECS Foot Shaker

The hats and uniform worn by the delegation were also symbolically significant. On the way to a smaller party following the church greeting I asked one of the pastors I had not yet met the meaning behind the colours used on the uniform. He told me quite predictably that the red was for Jesus' blood, the white for purity and the green for growth and heaven. Later that afternoon the pastor of the congregation, with whom I had now spent several occasions, approached and asked if I wanted to know the meaning behind the colours. With great enthusiasm he explained that the red vest which is closest to the body and the red on the cross represent the blood of the southerners who died during the war. The white cloak over the blood signifies peace and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The black belt signifies the land of southern Sudan, a land belonging to Africans. The green hat represents the green grass and growth of southern Sudan and that it is not dry and dusty like Kakuma or the north. The uniforms therefore are an important mix of meanings and symbols fusing the land, the war and Christianity into a single framework of meaning and relevance.

Though demonstrated in a substantially different manner than the PCOS and ECS congregations, the Catholic parish within the camp also displays elements of cultural recreation. Elaborating on the rationales behind the recent significant

Heart of the Jieng," in *Gateway to the Heart of Africa: Missionary Pioneers in Sudan*, eds. F. Pierli, M. T. Ratti and A. C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 103.

growth of Christ the King in the overlapping Equatoria and Dinka section of Zone 1, one young man explained:

The church itself; since [before] there was no church built people were praying under the trees. Most of the people they are attracted to the building because people are fighting. There are some people who come because of the word of God and some people because of the gathering. When people gather together maybe there is a friend. You want to meet a friend, and then you come to the church and meet him in that place. So the building itself it attracts people in order to come. So that is why the population increased but before the population was few. And the change is also because of some of the activities of the church. Since before the building there were not many activities. But now since the church has grown there are so many activities which were created for the youth to participate in. So others are attracted for the activities. Others are just coming with no part in any of the activities, they are just coming. Even they have no faith but because of the building, and the meeting together and seeing other friends that is why these people want to come.¹⁵⁵

Though articulated within the context of one particular denomination the above resonates across the refugee camp. The church serves as a communal gathering point strengthening social networking, facilitating interaction and encouraging communal discussions. As Alanya Joseph the chairman for the Equatoria community noted, ‘I think the people are going to the church now because they know God is there and can help them in the situation they have. They must persevere in some condition... So now you try to go to the church. You know when you go there you can meet with your friends and they can council you.’¹⁵⁶ In addition Christ the King serves as a point of contact with the broader world and a channel through which information is passed, especially in relation to war developments.¹⁵⁷ Both the PCOS and the ECS also incorporate into their regular order of worship a time of greeting especially focused on Sudan related news. As one of the few consistent community-wide opportunities for assembly, information and viewpoints disseminated in this manner are especially influential in shaping public perception and attitude and further underscore the importance of the church as a cultural gatekeeper building communal ideals.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Philip, member of Christ the King, interview with author, 18 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁵⁶ Alanya Joseph, chairman of the Equatorian community, interview with author, 14 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁵⁷ Luok, member of Christ the King, interview with author, 18 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Most refugees find personal contacts with travelers – new arrivals, temporary visitors, and persons who have made a return visit – to be the most effective source of information.’ Jonathan Bascom, *Losing Place: Refugee Populations and Rural Transformations in East Africa* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 149.

In addition, among the Equatoria community the Catholic church has contributed to maintaining traditional practices of mourning. As part of the services extended to the community, Christ the King provides training to youth in songs appropriate for singing during times of grieving. This enables youth to participate in the mourning process and processions in a sensitive and meaningful manner. Offering his opinion on the biggest contribution the church has made to his community, the Equatorian chairman observed, ‘when we sometimes have a funeral in our community here they are the first people to come to make sure that they mourn. So after mourning sometimes they even assist those people with whatever they have. So now people think that the church is also part of us.’¹⁵⁹

Times of rapid transition and a refugee experience of cultural disintegration stripped away normative life patterns. Ongoing difficulties, tensions and insecurities have further eroded sentiments of stability leading to a ‘whole structure... fraught with competition, suspicion, and mistrust.’¹⁶⁰ Within Kakuma, the churches have counterbalanced these forces by extending and recreating elements of traditional southern Sudanese society. Services among Nuer, Dinka and Equatorians reflected patterns of traditional hierarchy and to an important extent reconstructed communal identity and age-set boundaries of interaction, participation and group ideals. Imbued with symbols, celebrations and an unprecedented opportunity to serve as the prime information hub, the church has profoundly contributed to a stable and empowering society that though altered remains largely continuous to traditional patterns. Re-establishing semblances of normality is critical as societies are held together not in ‘trust per se but trust in a system of normative social relations, values, hierarchies, statuses, roles, obligations, sanctions, and so on,’ and further allows members within the society to adapt to a demanding situation.¹⁶¹ While rehabilitating cultural patterns of leadership, processes and values, though at times perhaps unintentionally, the church has not sought a return to a supposed ideal state best emulated. Alterations, and importantly, challenges have been made to culturally accepted norms. In terms of communal stabilisation this is perhaps most clearly

¹⁵⁹ Alanya Joseph, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

¹⁶⁰ Eftihia Voutira and Barbara E Harell-Bond, “In Search of the Locus of Trust: The Social World of the Refugee Camp,” in *Mistrusting Refugees*, eds. E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 219.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 207, underline original.

evidenced in approaches to ethnic identity and leads to the second major contribution by the churches to Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Building Peace from Hong Kong to Baghdad

Hong Kong is a land of bustling activity, commercial vitality and interpersonal networking. With numerous buildings and enterprising businessmen the air is full of buying and selling, bartering and bargaining. In popular perception it is not only a major cultural crossroad in a new economic paradigm, it is more importantly a commercial success. It is crowded but developed, symbolising rapid urbanisation. And in this case it stands in stark contrast to Baghdad, a land better known for sectarian violence, popular exploitation and perhaps most subtly – Islamic orientation. It is a place populated with youth who fell out of school due to hunger and parents lost to the war, grouped now into ‘gangs of warlord people.’¹⁶² Baghdad is full of ‘gang[s] of thieves’¹⁶³ looking to rob you, with force if necessary, best avoided late at night.¹⁶⁴ And in Kakuma these two zones straddle and polarise the camp with the Dinka on one side in the self-styled ‘Hong Kong’ and the Ethiopian-Somali-Nuer fighting it out in a Zone 5 colloquially known as ‘Baghdad.’ The Equatorians are caught in the middle. Wracked with violence and hostility the camp teeters between the two competing poles of Zone 3, Hong Kong and Zone 5, Baghdad.

Conflict, resource deprivation and ethnic hostility characterized life within Kakuma Refugee Camp stretching taut tensions, suspicions and insecurity within and between the Dinka, Nuer and Equatorian communities. As the Chairman of the Nuer community stated, ‘we have a problem with insecurity. Shooting was going on all the months, all the days... The insecurity is the first problem that we face in this area.’¹⁶⁵ From a Dinka perspective, ‘in the camp the peace has not [come] because

¹⁶² William Geit, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

¹⁶³ Daniel Aketch, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

¹⁶⁴ John Garang, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

¹⁶⁵ James Rout Wour, Chairman of the Nuer community, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

there is a lot of crime and people are always not good... For now we are in exile. We are in exile.'¹⁶⁶

Conflict arose out of a multiplicity of rationales. Sometimes the simple sharing of resources such as a water tap snapped into open struggles such as an incident that erupted between the Equatorian and Somali community in 2005.¹⁶⁷ In 1999 an argument begun between several drunken individuals turned into a fight that eventually spilled into a significant clash between the Bor Dinka and Equatorian community as family units sought to support their own relatives.¹⁶⁸ Armed confrontations are often furthered as local communities utilise cultural songs and dances 'provoking each other until something starts brewing up.'¹⁶⁹

Underlying the above triggers is the war in south Sudan. One young man lamented, 'so by the time that we came here as youths, so we are here peacefully, but our minds were still there in south Sudan so we were trying to practice the way we were in south Sudan because we are not knowing better the way of God.'¹⁷⁰ Pili Martin who oversees the security forces for the refugee camp believes that a major issue is a 'revenge cycle which has happened at home and they have brought here to the camp... caus[ing] insecurity especially for the ones who are already here.'¹⁷¹

In addition to the war, pre-existing animosities and barriers within southern Sudanese culture transferred by refugees to Kakuma have further decreased the potentiality for peaceful coexistence. Within south Sudan individuals were divided by cultural and religious customs and taboos that inhibited lasting cohesion.¹⁷² Demarcations, especially between ethnic groups, 'were encouraged by raids. They were encouraged by supporting that this community is not good by this one and that one.'¹⁷³ Another leader observed, 'people fought also over cultural differences

¹⁶⁶ Abraham Achuth, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

¹⁶⁷ Alanya Joseph, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Pili Martin, interview with author, 7 February 2006.

¹⁷⁰ Neville Lado Lok, member of PCOS, interview with author, 9 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁷¹ Pili Martin, interview with author, 7 February 2006.

¹⁷² John Jok Manyout, member of PCOS, interview with author, 9 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁷³ John Kong, member of PCOS, interview with author, 9 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

because these people came from different backgrounds. Now if I come from my own tribe and you come from your tribe and we meet without guidance then we can come into conflict.’¹⁷⁴ That is, tribal divisions, historical raids, revenge cycles and a mentality of war all influenced life within Kakuma actively decreasing the possibility of communal peace.

Importantly, this situation today has to a large extent been radically altered and overturned. Though tensions are certainly not totally dissipated, as Pili Martin buoyantly stated, ‘now here in the camp it’s much better if you ask me... the conflicts are not as bad.’¹⁷⁵ The Chairman for the Nuer community noted, ‘the insecurity problem is over, [it is] not like before.’¹⁷⁶ Responding to a question concerning ethnic conflicts within Kakuma one focus group participant affirmed, ‘it is difficult to understand each other because different language is there, different culture that one is there. Otherwise what we are saying is that it is reduced, this one is reducing because of Bible sharing... We are different tribes but I can also receive word of God and forgiveness must also be there.’¹⁷⁷ Acknowledging the significant impact of churches on Kakuma Refugee Camp, Sabine Knoedlstorfer asserts, ‘most especially the Sudanese churches have influence on the community life... The religious leaders try to appease the anger of the refugees and to prevent conflict in the camps... The religious services have the function to solve conflicts and to give a kind of security to the unsafe life of refugees.’¹⁷⁸ Though other elements have contributed, the church, reinforced by growing group identification and categorisation has played the predominant role in overcoming traditional barriers and a tenuous refugee experience to produce peace building efforts critical in communal stabilisation.

In Kakuma the impact and influence of the church is significant and substantial. The church helps reconstitute group identification and ideals, extending traditional values and practices in important but different ways. The church also

¹⁷⁴ David Deng, member of SPC, interview with author, 10 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁷⁵ Pili Martin, interview with author, 7 February 2006.

¹⁷⁶ James Rout Wour, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

¹⁷⁷ Barnaba Uti, member of Catholic Christ the King, interview with author, 11 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁷⁸ Sabine Knoedlstorfer, “Kakuma Refugee Camps” (Berlin: Unpublished, 1999). Her comment follows a period of fieldwork extending from March-July 1997.

exhibits a fundamental role in the development of peace and security in the refugee camp particularly by building a broad consensus of political consciousness extending beyond ethnic identification to incorporate all southern Sudanese. In an interview in Kakuma, the Associate Moderator of the Presbyterian Church noted that this effort is central to faith in PCOS congregations:

In fact the central element in the church is the uniqueness of the society, that the society may be one as God said, "I come to this world so that you may be one." That is the role that the church is to exercise is to make people to be aware with the different groups, different languages, different cultures [that they] might be one in God's faith as well as human so that they will join hands to work for the future generation.¹⁷⁹

That the church has played such a fundamental role in contributing to the development of a more unified political consciousness extending in-group categorisation rests largely on the leadership initiative of numerous local community pastors. Traditionally within both Dinka and Nuer communities religious leaders played an important role in establishing and maintaining peaceful relations within the community.¹⁸⁰ In Kakuma pastors have inherited this role, responsibility and legacy due to a variety of important and interconnected rationales related to the changing nature of southern Sudanese society keenly felt and present in the refugee context. With cultures that value peace as a central component to societal life and understanding, church leadership, both trained and more significantly an active lay leadership, filled a peace building vacuum by actively promoting an ideology that extended ethnic boundaries across southern segments in a powerful, relevant and meaningful way.¹⁸¹

Institutionally this effort was clearly seen in the establishment of the PCOS Mobile Bible School (MBS) in Zone 5. Rev Stephen Ter Nyoun Yier a Nuer from Upper Nile and a PCOS denominational leader helped found the MBS circa 1998 as

¹⁷⁹ Peter Makuac, Associate Moderator of PCOS-Akobo, interview with author, 8 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁸⁰ It is important to note that these religious leaders also played a prime role during times of war. As Lienhardt notes, 'there is no contradiction between the function of the master of the fishing-spear as a guide in war and as a mediator and peace-maker. They are functions of different situations, which have in common the assurance of the welfare of the tribe and subtribe.' Godfrey Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 211. See also FN 606.

¹⁸¹ For more on the social identity approach to the offices of leadership see Michael A. Hogg, "Intragroup Processes, Group Structure and Social Identity," in *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel*, ed. Peter W. Robinson (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996), 80-3.

part of a broader effort by the PCOS to facilitate pastoral training.¹⁸² Recognising that the southern war necessitated broader allegiances beyond inter-tribal sub-clans Yier hoped that the MBS would help reinforce a Kakuma wide Christian solidarity overcoming traditional tribal boundaries, allegiances and denominational affiliations.¹⁸³ Towards this end he visited extensively with Dinka ECS leadership sharing his vision and encouraging them to send a student to the school. After initially commissioning an older Dinka gentleman who quietly sat through the first several days of teaching the ECS Dinka leadership was convinced of the legitimacy of the institution and a young pastor was allowed to attend. While strengthening relationships and opening participants to a healthy broader ecumenism, both denominationally and tribally, this effort also demonstrates the difficulty in institutionalising sentiments held hesitantly by the community. For not long into the arrangement the ECS leadership accused one of the students of trying to introduce PCOS practices into ECS life and all ECS students were withdrawn. All the same this short experiment demonstrates a tentative willingness by church leaders to formalise relational interaction while actively promoting an ecumenical consciousness stretching beyond segmentary divisions.¹⁸⁴ In and of itself this was a new and important development with direct communal stabilising implications, and while institutional links failed to take root, less formal and more immediate response-oriented endeavours were more numerous and more efficacious.

As previously noted numerous clashes erupted within the camp leading to armed conflicts primarily between southern Sudanese refugees resulting in burned homes, loss of property, injuries, a destabilised community and most grievously, death. In the midst of often harrowing events the church was at the forefront of response. Urging peace and restraining anger, church leaders utilised their position of leadership to influence actions and demonstrate an inherent connectivity to competing tribes with an implied understanding that relational ties demand respect and responsibility. Repeatedly following times of battle between Dinka and Nuer

¹⁸² In addition to the MBS in Kakuma, PCOS founded three other Mobile Bible Schools in south Sudan. Armin Zimmermann, "Report of the Mobile Bible School Kakuma of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan" (Unpublished, 2006), Personal communication with author.

¹⁸³ The following is based on an interview with Stephen Ter Nyoun Yier, Assistant Director of Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency and former Vice Chairman of the NSCC, interview with author, 20 February 2006, Lokichogio.

¹⁸⁴ Importantly the MBS has continued to hire staff across ethnic lines with Dinka and at one point even an Eritrean staff member.

communities, pastors from the two tribes at considerable risk entered into the opposing territory to offer prayers, urge reconciliation and demonstrate the sameness and therefore the safety in developing peaceful interrelationships. This is clearly stated in the following exchange:

Peter: The church says or the Christian says among the different ethnic groups, Dinka or Nuer or Zande or Equatorian, in coming to the point of identity is only to know that you are only one in Jesus. And if you are one in Jesus you have to stop violence...

James: For example we have the church leaders go to some of the other areas to pray together... For example, sometime the pastor from this Dinka community can go up to

Peter: Nuer community.

James: Nuer community and pray there and, and the same with the Nuer. They will just come to Dinka community to pray. That will show a kind of reconciliation. That is what is happening.¹⁸⁵

From the Nuer side Rev Peter Kai also confirmed this disclosing:

When there are any problems to work out between the two communities in the camp, for example during that time we call ourselves the Nuer we are talking one way, there is something that occurs between the Dinka and the Nuer. We the pastors who call ourselves in that time, we try our best to make the reconciliation between the two groups. We work together. That is how the church was forming itself. If it is another community like for example the group who call themselves Dinka... We the pastors from both sides the Dinka and Nuer we call ourselves together to work together.¹⁸⁶

The importance of this cultural exchange in the midst of heated anger, enflamed passions and personal injury cannot be overstated. Traditional attitudes, long histories of animosity, war induced mentality and exasperating refugee circumstances forced the Dinka and Nuer communities to live in a state of destabilising fear of attack and reprisal. The camp was often polarised into the competing realms of Hong Kong and Baghdad. In precisely these circumstances pastoral leadership and initiative came to symbolise the opportunity of a peace building bridge. Using their position as collateral the pastoral cultural exchange curtailed retaliation and poignantly modelled in their person a broader ethnic identification that incorporated all southern Sudanese thereby underscoring a collective communal responsibility for peace. Though never institutionalised, as an informal crisis response utilised by pastors from all of the present tribes it was a powerful tool. Venturing into 'enemy territory' to offer personal condolences and share in grief and mourning, while at the same time asking the community to band

¹⁸⁵ Peter Yueugu and James Aker, members of ECS, interview with author, 6 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁸⁶ Peter Kai Nyon, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

together in prayers for peace proved deeply calming and moving. In this way pastors came to embody a set of peace building principles that included broad ethnic solidarity. As one Dinka church leader shared, '[pastors] are the symbol of the peace. When you walk along with the [pastoral collar] nobody can stop you to not enter into that, because you are a pastor.'¹⁸⁷

Outside connections and external links to broader resources have also helped establish the church within Kakuma as the predominant peace building actor and to further facilitate peace building initiatives. One example involves a 1995 clash between Dinka and Nuer that left several dead.¹⁸⁸ At the time of the incident Kakuma refugee pastor Stephen Ter Nyoun Yier was meeting with several visiting American pastors in nearby Lokichogio. After receiving word that evening Yier overcame initial hesitation by the American pastors to visit the camp under the auspices of the New Sudan Council of Churches to send a message that in times of conflict the churches were standing alongside the people praying for peace. Early the next morning Yier and the American pastors arrived in the camp. Initially greeting 'his own people' at the main PCOS Nuer congregation in Zone 5, the team quickly moved on to the central ECS Dinka congregation in Zone 3 to the chagrin of the Nuer church leadership. Despite tension in the air the team visited with the pastors not to condemn the actions of the previous evening but to mourn, share friendship and pray for the situation. With permission from the ECS leadership the team began to move to the various praying centres and synagogues in Dinka areas stopping to briefly pray at each location with those present from the local area. According to Yier, this non-confrontational approach on the basis of solidarity and friendship further demonstrated to the camp that Dinka and Nuer could overcome dividing tribal issues. At the end of the day the team finished back at the main PCOS compound by which time many Nuer had gathered and a time of prayer was begun that involved both repentance and mourning. In addition to the pastoral cultural exchange the presence of outside observers had an impact on the situation helping defuse a dangerous tribal conflict. Kerbina Dul Myon, the head chief of the Nuer court, further signified the influence of broader external connections by the churches on the Kakuma situation noting:

¹⁸⁷ Peter Yueugu, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

¹⁸⁸ The following is from discussion with Stephen Yier, interview with author, 20 February 2006.

The church is playing a very important role in the community. One of the roles that the church plays is that when there is a problem in the community, example war, so when the community see that and the pastors see that this problem is big they may call the other pastors who are far from them like those who are in Nairobi, those who are in Lokichogio, and then they come together as a church team with the community together. They stand and they solve that problem and even they pray for those who are still insisting of what is going on.¹⁸⁹

The churches have also attempted to utilise wider affiliations to emphasise peace building initiatives outside of times of immediate conflict. In 2005 for example the Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC) in Zone 5 hosted two workshops on peace and reconciliation. Drawing in slightly less than one hundred participants each time from across the denominational spectrum the workshops were taught by Kenyan members of a Pentecostal church outside of the refugee camp. The workshops were completely funded by the local church by saving tithe money and asking members to donate cups of maize and wheat grain for food. According to church leaders the LWF peace, conflict and reconciliation programme was unaware of their activities, and demonstrates an effort by local churches to rely on networks extending beyond the refugee camp to further enable the building of peace within the refugee camp.¹⁹⁰

Similar efforts have been undertaken by the Catholic church in Kakuma. A Peace and Justice Commission was created at a parish level that rotates around the various chapels providing workshop and training opportunities. These workshops particularly focus on helping people develop the skills necessary in handling interpersonal conflicts caused by quarrelling among individuals.¹⁹¹ In 1999, for example, the Commission helped mediate a conflict between the Bor Dinka and Equatorian community and hosted workshops that April, August and November ‘to educate people on the dangers of conflict and importance of peace with one another as children of God.’¹⁹²

Practised only occasionally these efforts have not had the same lasting impact as responses during times of heated confrontation. Correspondingly, while outside resources are an asset it has been primarily local and internal efforts that have made the most substantial difference. Nonetheless, internal pastoral leadership and

¹⁸⁹ Kerbina Dul Myon, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

¹⁹⁰ The above is based on a conversation with Reuben Culdiac and David Deng, church leaders of the SPC, interview with author, 10 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁹¹ Christ the King Focus Group, interview with author, 18 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁹² *Diocese of Rumbek Fourth Annual Assembly, January 23- 29, 2000* (Nairobi: Diocese of Rumbek, 2000), 45-6.

external networks of broader resources contributed to the development of increased reciprocity between southern Sudanese tribes within Kakuma.

Though church leadership specifically inherited the mantle of religious peace building from earlier religious traditions the developing correlation between church and peace builder in Kakuma was produced precisely because leadership filtered down into congregational life and activity. That is, a broad custodianship was generated. This is most clearly seen in the development of inter-communal women's prayer groups. Following a 1996 Dinka-Nuer conflict that saw nine people killed a group of women formed a Dinka-Nuer prayer group that has continued to regularly meet to pray for peace and fast from six in the morning to six in the evening.¹⁹³ Over time a number of other communal prayer groups were formed by women and considered to be by many an integral reason for a more peaceful refugee camp.

Practical sermons also offered training and advice in proper behaviour and attitudes to be exhibited. As one young Nuer man stated, 'even though something small has happened you cannot release your temper to fight this. We have learned how to tackle something in the way of negotiation... So now we are in a peaceful community because of the church.'¹⁹⁴ In the Equatorian community one man asserted, 'we also see some changes done in fighting, there is also some people changing with this forgiveness.'¹⁹⁵ In the Dinka community one supposed, 'it is very clear that when people are traumatised, when people are doing some problem that they feel is inching into their body there is nothing that can remove that tension lest the Bible.'¹⁹⁶ Alanya Joseph the Equatorian Community Chairman and a part of the Seventh Day Adventist Church leadership avowed, 'in 1992 there was so many crimes here. People were dying every time, illegal killings... But now people go to the church. We [tell] them if you kill somebody your sin will not be forgiven... If you commit a crime you will not be given a chance to go alone. You can be arrested and taken to jail.'¹⁹⁷ The example modelled by church leaders was further reinforced through sermons and practical advice in a way that filtered into the broader

¹⁹³ James Rout Wour, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

¹⁹⁴ Neville Lado Lok, interview with author, 9 February 2006.

¹⁹⁵ David Athiel Kong, Equatorian, interview with author, 11 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁹⁶ Daniel Aketch, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

¹⁹⁷ Alanya Joseph, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

community slowly challenging boundaries, pushing ethnic perceptions, stressing negotiating skills and ultimately therefore strengthening community stability.

Importantly the church was not alone in this endeavour. Education has also played a substantial part. One participant observed, 'we cannot say we are all the same... What lead us to unite are the school and the churches. You have the culture in your tribe but when you come to school you will learn from others.'¹⁹⁸ Alongside education has been the growth of English creating a more broad community-wide language critical in developing shared experiences and approaches. Both of these are underscored by the growing sense of urbanisation within the camp displayed in larger economic zones such as that characterised as Hong Kong, the proliferation of new material goods, the size of the camp and the opportunity for increased interaction between ethnic groups. Education, language and 'town life' has played a valuable role in contributing to peace efforts. However these additions have assisted more in solidifying a growing re-categorization pushed by the churches than serving as the predominant movers themselves.

Though analysis has thus far focused primarily on the role of the church in extending peace between tribes at a macro level, constructive contributions were also made during times of within-tribal difficulties particularly at the level of family dispute. As previously mentioned 'youths' were a frequent source of discord. Perhaps initially low-intense, in a setting festering with unresolved anger even bickering related to football matches at times escalated into significant conflagrations.¹⁹⁹ Expressing how church leaders would respond in such situations one Episcopal leader explained, 'but the priest when we are there we can do everything. So you can have [them] together and divide them and talk to them and listen... We go and see what has happened. And we tell them that that cannot happen.'²⁰⁰ Action was further underscored by Biblical guidance as one individual stated, 'the Bible also is one of the councillors. It say let us behave like this, let us behave like this, let us behave like this.'²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Peter Jawaka, member of Jehovah's Witness, interview with author, 11 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

¹⁹⁹ Kerbina Dul Myon, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

²⁰⁰ Abraham Achuth, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

²⁰¹ Alanya Joseph, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

Related to the above is the problem of extra-marital pregnancies especially when concerned with young unmarried women. Peter Kwent, the Chairman of the Bentiu Community at Kakuma articulated, ‘another problem that we face is fights. There is small fighting especially when there is the kind of pregnancy of the ladies.’²⁰² Further elaborating Kerbina Myon accentuated, ‘when there is a pregnant girl [that] one cause a fight between the brothers of the lady and those who impregnate that girl.’²⁰³ In such circumstances pastors try to intervene offering counselling and practical advice. Myon continued, ‘the pastor himself can solve that problem without involving any large number of people with the girl. It can be solved easily.’²⁰⁴ Pastoral intervention in this type of case is important as it will stem wider spread violence, and failure to resolve the issue at this level will force the case to the docket of the court with fines and legal ramifications likely. Thus church leadership also served as a semi-preventative frontline response in resolving micro level conflicts within the more localised context.

As indicated in the above, particularly at this level, there were important limitations to the role and influence of the church. Conflicts arising out of what could be described as ‘typical’ sources were the main responsibility of community leaders. Pastoral leadership often provided an initial response only. As Rev Peter Kai clarified, ‘if it is a normal case which can be solved by the church leader he can call this and do this process. If it is a big case he can tell the chairman come for this case, and give advice to the chairman.’²⁰⁵ Participants also frequently noted the combination of pastoral and community leaders working in conjunction. As an example one Equatorian noted, ‘when there is conflict in the community, especially because church leaders are well known, they will also intervene by working together with the authority.’²⁰⁶ Chairmen, court officials and other community leaders played an active and important role in resolving conflicts and easing community tensions especially at the micro level and church leaders often acknowledged the need to defer to other officials. At the camp macro level, however, these procedures broke down

²⁰² Peter Kwent, chairman of the Bentiu Community of Kakuma Refugee Camp, interview with author, 11 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

²⁰³ Kerbina Dul Myon, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Peter Kai Nyon, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

²⁰⁶ David Athiel Kong, interview with author, 11 February 2006.

as within the remit of official capacities there were no mechanisms to resolve inter-tribal clashes and disputes. Traditional cultural patterns and approaches, of which the official camp positions are an inexact mirror organized by the UNHCR, often emphasised division and identification via communal differentiation. In this context ordained and lay church leaders alike offered critical leadership by emphasising inter-cultural relationships and therefore responsibility, modelling an example of safe cultural exchange, relying on broader external networks for support, and defying and ultimately transforming cultural perceptions of ethnicity. The predominant and overriding challenge to peace within Kakuma occurred as a result of the polarisation and stigmatisation of the camp into Hong Kong and Baghdad. This process of dichotomisation was eventually eased and largely overturned due to church initiative and leadership and in this way, therefore, in Kakuma Refugee Camp the church exerted the primary impulses of communal stabilisation.

As one set of authors stressed, ‘life in Kakuma refugee camp in northern Kenya is harsh, dangerous and characterized by social chaos and lack of normal social structures.’²⁰⁷ To a large extent the church helped regenerate these social structures by replicating traditional patterns and practices in a manner that transformed ethnic boundaries into a wider social network of ‘southern’ Sudanese.²⁰⁸ This process resulted in both increased peace building initiatives and the re-categorization of social allegiances and affiliations underpinned by a growing perception of ‘Christian’ religiosity. In a rapidly socially changing milieu the church through its recreation of society and approach to peace building formed an important bridge ensuring both continuity and adaptability. While church leaders certainly shaped, influenced and at times even lead in this endeavour, the process does not reflect the systematic pursuit of an elite agenda. For as Vernon White notes it is ‘through the customs, symbols, ceremonies of limited and local organizations we are furnished with the imagination and vision necessary to sustain allegiance to broader social goals.’²⁰⁹ That is, in a war-wearied Kakuma a pre-existing latent desire for

²⁰⁷ Linda Bartolomei, Eileen Pittaway and Emma Elizabeth Pittaway, “Who Am I? Identity and Citizenship in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya,” *Development* 46 (September 2003): 87.

²⁰⁸ It is important to note that the new social in-group was extended to all southern Sudanese not to all Kakuma refugees. Social distance was kept and maintained between Sudanese and other ethnicities like Somali and Ethiopian. In terms of communal stabilisation in and of itself this was not detrimental as the wide numerical disparity between Sudanese and all of the other groups mitigated this possibility to a great extent.

²⁰⁹ Vernon White, *Identity* (London: SCM, 2002), 11.

social peace found the necessary means and tools to be enacted within the ceremonies, teaching and leadership of the local church.

That the church served as an active conduit for broadening re-identification was neither inevitable nor even necessarily predictable. As particularly the following chapter will demonstrate, outside of Kakuma the church did not play as active and influential role in developing social consistency. Within the camp churches themselves have not always exemplified a spirit of unity as there have been several important cases of church splits in both the ECS and PCOS in relation to the sharing of leadership and resources. Although within Kakuma church leaders have responded in joint cooperation during times of intense tribal hostilities, it is critical to note that outside of these immediate contexts pastoral cooperation was more theoretical than practical. Just as institutional efforts such as the MBS have failed to solidify, there is little joint inter-denominational work initiated by the churches.²¹⁰ Though there is respect for other denominations, each tends to function within a more limited enclave without significant overlap until moments of communal crisis. At these moments however, and within Kakuma there were many, the role of the church was vital and significant.

By offering uniting Christian principles, practical training and reflexively utilising its own leadership as a model the church bolstered communal stabilisation and initiated peace building efforts that substantiated social mores and values. Although this effort was supplemented by other agencies such as education and the programmes of international NGOs, for Sudanese refugees themselves the church shifted to the forefront of society as it was 'maximally representative of the shared social identity and consensual position of the group.'²¹¹ Though a re-categorisation of a new social in-group was perhaps an unintentional by-result, it was a result all the same. As church teaching on ethnicity was imbibed by numerous individuals across the ethnic and denominational spectrum it was externalised and applied to life conduct within the refugee camp. While at an individual level this would probably not have exerted significant stimulus, collectively, it produced a mass social movement with considerable social influence and reverberation. The level of church influence, therefore, is not merely an aggregate of impact on individual lives but in

²¹⁰ Rev Tut Mai, interview with author, 19 February 2006.

²¹¹ S. Alexander Haslam, *Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 66.

the case of Kakuma, the medium for social re-evaluation and collective movement towards re-categorisation resulting in the communal stabilisation of Hong Kong and Baghdad and pointing to a third impact on Kakuma Refugee Camp by the local churches.

Modelling Social Initiatives

Kakuma is a place as described by one refugee where ‘everything is made very difficult for the refugees and you must suffer for any simple thing.’²¹² Recognising the needs of its local constituents as well as the necessity to help members adapt to the demands of the refugee setting churches extended their influence as the primary social custodian by providing models for social behaviour in two key areas.

First, the church impacted the broader Kakuma community through economic and resource initiatives. In the PCOS this is illustrated in advice offered by the Ruling Elder Samuel Gai Puok during one Sunday morning service. In addition to reminding the congregation about proper seating arrangements during worship, Puok instructed the congregation to follow the example and model set by the church by filling extra jerry cans with water whenever possible in order to be prepared to ration water during this time of shortage for the Nuer community.²¹³ Though it was not possible to ascertain the impact of this advice on the community it does illustrate the point that the church understood its role as one extending into the holistic needs of its constituents in a way that combined practical advice with moral adherence to a community expressed in Christian manifestations.

The ECS similarly perceived its role as relating to the multiple segments of members’ lives. As the High Deacon Samuel Deng expressed, ‘[pastors] look in the Bible and then they compare it to their culture and to their social and to their organisation politically also... The Bible has relevance culturally, politically, socially and also economically. And when they see that they have the relevance they

²¹² Martin Luxton, “The Pilgrimage of a Sudanese Refugee,” in *“But God is Not Defeated!” Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 32.

²¹³ John Riak, interview with author, 5 February 2006.

can conform together and bring together their culture and their life into the Bible.’²¹⁴ That is, the behaviour in general community life should conform to principles established within church circles. Members of the ECS confirmed that they had benefited from this wide purview of the church. For example one expounded:

In Kakuma how we are surviving here we are given, somebody is given 5kgs for 16 days. This is the raw grain, the raw grains for maize and there is no other item. And you know the church can teach the people you know when you are given this small food this is how you manage it and this teaching just spread. If somebody just tries to survive alone you cannot survive. Because now imagine you divide 5kgs for 16 days you cannot even take the week. It is hard. And now what people could do is they live in community together and now this food should be served in the economical way, I mean in common we create our economical system so we can survive that way.²¹⁵

Especially relevant to the thousands of ‘lost boys’ unprepared and unaccustomed to handling food division and preparation church guidance offered needed practical advice in a context where food scarcity was a legitimate source of concern and a physically debilitating factor. In this instance the church instructed its members to pool their rations and share communal meals in order to stretch the provided food. According to Garang it was a practice that spread into the community beyond the confirmed members of the church. It furthermore illustrates the observation that indigenous individual’s ‘coping skills offer more hope for survival than the logistical and political interventions engineered by relief specialists.’²¹⁶

All of the interviewed churches also described how tithes and resources collected by the church were distributed to help meet community needs. The PCOS regularly accepts food in lieu of money that can then be distributed to the sick and to needy Turkana.²¹⁷ James Ateny and Reuben Cudiac emphasised that the SPC distributes its tithes to offer ‘domestic help’ such as covering medical costs of the sick.²¹⁸ The following exchange among ECS members is also illustrative:

²¹⁴ Samuel Deng, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

²¹⁵ John Garang, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²¹⁶ John Prendergast, “Mortality, Food Insecurity and Food Aid Dependence in Sudan,” in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 67.

²¹⁷ John Riak, interview with author, 5 February 2006.

²¹⁸ James Ateny Lual, member of SPC, and Reuben Cudiac, lay leader of SPC, interview with author, 10 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp. As Benson Deng describes, ‘when we were sick and went to the hospital, we were told the medicines were not available, but if we went to the market, the medicines were there, and they were very expensive and we couldn’t afford them.’ Deng, Deng and Jak, *They Poured Fire on Us*, 278.

Phillip: The church is helping orphans. They are those people who are being compassionate always. When there is a small girl, you can even find a small girl like this one there is no mother. Imagine this girl, how you will imagine this life? But church is there to support. There are those people who always came here, blind people but church is taking 20 Kenya shillings and giving every Sunday. [Those] people are supported by the church...

Gabriel: So the church is looking after orphans and widows because war has killed. So many women here are widows. So I think that would be the first mission of the church to look after the widows and the orphans.²¹⁹

Within Kakuma the church has positioned itself as the cultural custodian concerned with group holism. Through recreating traditional societal patterns and overcoming ethnic divisions Kakuma has witnessed the development of new group identification on the basis of Christian religiosity. This re-categorisation is both solidified and extended to the benefit of the refugee community through the efforts of the individual churches to provide communal guidance and practical advice in economic and resource management in addition to installing internal aid mechanisms for marginalised members of the community. The end result is a strengthened Sudanese self-identification with the church community and its behavioural assumptions and context as well as an increased ability for the church to shape other elements within the society.

This ability is demonstrated in a second key area: modelling cultural developments. Faced with a barrage of new experiences adapting to the refugee setting and to the demands of a progressive social agenda set by international NGOs can be trying and culturally stretching. By tentatively blending traditional norms with new and progressive values churches have helped Sudanese refugees in Kakuma accept and inculcate these ideals. This is clearly demonstrated in the area of gender equality. Traditional culture across southern Sudan was broadly patriarchal. Women were given few opportunities for public leadership or equal access to education. As Marisan San Deng described, 'traditionally women were not allowed to say anything before men.'²²⁰ The international regime administering Kakuma however would radically challenge these notions demanding not only equal opportunity but also equal voice. Teresa Bul Chan the Chair Lady for the Nuer Community responding to a question concerning the origin of gender equality explained:

²¹⁹ Phillip Makueol and Gabriel Majok, members of ECS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

²²⁰ Marisan San Deng, women's representative on the Nuer court, interview with author, 14 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

The idea [came] from UN and the workers of the UNHCR. Why it is coming up, it was at the time of the meetings of the community leaders. The first time only men were attending the meetings and the UN asked them, “Where is the lady? Why do you come always without the ladies? And then the ladies should be balanced.” And then they grow up that idea; they bring it up in detail. The UN said, “I need the gender balance. If the men attend, the women should be attend[ing]...” They opened high school for ladies alone. Yes. They opened an English course for ladies through the women’s trust. And now the ladies are improving in leadership.²²¹

While churches have not been at the forefront of gender equality they have played a role in helping Sudanese culture adapt and implement this policy thereby expanding the number impacted by this development. Chan continued on, ‘the church does not play any role in the community to help lift up the women but except if there are some activities that need to be carried out in the church.’²²² That is though the church does not pursue an active development of gender equality, as it has done in ethnic re-orientation, the churches have responded by increasing the participation of women in involvement and leadership in a manner that to a certain extent functions as a public staging ground. Women have been given positions of leadership from church deacon to congregational pastor and among the ECS even Deacon. Having received funding, in the spring of 2006 the PCOS was using the Mothers’ Union network to launch a special English course just for women with no corresponding male counterpart.²²³ Interviewed male church leaders were certainly familiar with and sensitive to issues related to gender development. As the following quote notes; however there are still numerous challenges:

We have so many problems in the camp as women... We may have the two ways that we should come up as women. One, in the church we may come up and the second way is education. Education, if we got better education we may come up more than the men so that we may do all those things that are done by men. And even we can be good but because we lack water that is why you see our minds are taking on what should you do tomorrow for your children? The clothes are dirty, the climate is hot and everything is confusing for what

²²¹ Teresa Bul Chan, interview with author, 10 February 2006. Interestingly limited reports indicate that within southern Sudan the war may have also opened up new opportunities for public service for women through enlistment in the SPLA military or SPLM social services. Stephanie Beswick, “Women, War, and Leadership in South Sudan (1700-1994),” in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 93-111.

²²² Teresa Bul Chan, interview with author, 10 February 2006.

²²³ The English course was funded by Mission 21 and was to last for a full year with up to twenty-four participants. Students were to be selected partly on the basis of ethnicity to ensure that the course included women from the Nuer, Dinka, Dinka-Bor, Anyuak, and Murle communities. Women who were not selected but were active members of the Women’s Union were requested to help watch the children of those women involved as noted by the author during attendance at a weekly Mother’s Union meeting on 8 February 2006.

you want to do. But it is destroying what you may get from the church and the way you are lifted up yourself in education is very hard for us. We face many problems.²²⁴

The above highlights three relevant issues. First, the church is playing a role in helping the women ‘come up.’ Second, this role is secondary to the significance and impact of education. Third, although deeply desiring equality, women are disproportionately affected by problems within the camp in a way that threatens to overwhelm the small achievements already made.

The record of the church in gender equality is therefore equivocal. In Kakuma churches have offered women leadership positions and due to the wide impact of the church more public prestige. Importantly the church has helped the refugee community internalise gender equality ideals originating from the UNHCR and international NGOs. However this development has certainly not been an active component of primary concern and great disparity still exists. As Mary Akop lamented, ‘even in the church now we are still behind. Yes, when you compare men and women even in the church where people should be equal but we are still behind, we the women because we don’t get education.’²²⁵ While the church has provided a limited model for this social initiative the church should more critically assess the existing inequities and actively develop strategies pursuing full human equality and development as it has in other areas. In this respect limited models, important as they are, are not sufficient to meet the challenges of long-standing cultural disparity.

In addition to gender equality there are a number of other socially progressive issues that the church sought to emulate and in a limited way stretch traditional cultural boundaries. For example teaching procured through the PCOS helped at least some members address issues of age inequality. Referring to his experience prior to arrival at Kakuma, Neville Lado Lok noted, ‘by that time also the young people like us could not go out into the public or talk where people are gathering but now because the church has come into our place we know that everybody has the right to talk and to say what he has or what he wants to tell the people.’²²⁶ In the Equatorian community, the Catholic congregation of Christ the King stages dramas about HIV/AIDS that stretches traditional taboos related to the public discourse on

²²⁴ Elizabeth Nacha Kai, member of PCOS, interview with author, 15 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

²²⁵ Mary Akop Acher, interview with author, 15 February 2006.

²²⁶ Neville Lado Lok, interview with author, 9 February 2006.

sexuality by disseminating much needed information concerning this growing disease.²²⁷ In relation to education, open Monday through Saturday, the ECS maintains eight public libraries spread throughout the camp based at various Episcopal chapels.²²⁸ The Catholic charity Don Bosco has opened the camp's only post High School educational facility. Located almost in the geographical centre of the camp Don Bosco trains men and women, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, in a number of vocational skills ranging from computers to carpentry and electricity so that 'pupils should go and rebuild south Sudan.'²²⁹ Perhaps unintentionally, by enabling greater educational access churches are further validating a communal shift in perceived leadership qualifications that reinforces a growing age and gender equality.

In these ways the church has responded to outside stimulants by incorporating broader ideals into the life and practice of the church in a limited way. By themselves the individual impact of these efforts are probably not significant. They do however illustrate several important realities. First, it demonstrates that while the church is concerned with the spiritual needs of its constituents, it is also interested in the much broader physical and social needs of the community. Second, by incorporating these external ideals, even if in a limited way, the church offers the community a possible model of cultural adaptability. It furthermore moves a culturally relevant debate to a much broader societal base thereby increasing accessibility. It confirms an observation made by Agnes Callamard that 'local agents are not passive subjects of social change imposed by outsiders and "external" forces, but that they are able to transform supra-local influences and forces into local forms.'²³⁰ In Kakuma the church more than any other agency serves as this bridge of translation and transformation. Alongside other forms of cultural recreation and successful endeavours to enact peace building mechanisms in Kakuma, the church reinforces among Sudanese themselves a holistic life framework at the forefront of

²²⁷ Christ the King Focus Group, interview with author, 18 February 2006.

²²⁸ William Geit, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²²⁹ Father Jacobs, priest of Catholic parish and director of Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre, interview with author, 14 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

²³⁰ Agnes Callamard, "Refugee Women: A Gendered and Political Analysis of the Refugee Experience," in *Global Changes in Asylum Regimes*, ed. Daniele Joly (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 141.

needed cultural continuity and adaptation. That is in an environment conducive to traditional cultural erosion, the church has encouraged revitalisation.²³¹

An important corollary rationale to this reinvigoration has been the ability of the church, particularly the ECS, to help refugees reinterpret their situation in a meaningful and hope inducing manner. As one individual maintained, ‘if you have suffered you will be blessed... You have suffered; you will get back what you have suffered.’²³² For many Sudanese the symbolism of the cross further demonstrates that blessing is linked to suffering. Replicas of the cross are found throughout the camp, widely used in worship services and frequently mentioned as a significant theological component. At one level this focus on the cross represents an acknowledgment of death in a war-saturated context that borders on preoccupation as death becomes externally symbolised and lifted to the air during worship. At another level however, it should not be understood as a macabre fascination with death itself but as a symbol ultimately carrying a meaning of victory, hope, purpose and regeneration. It thus conveys the precarious position of southern Sudanese refugees: finding hope in the midst of death. As Rachel Majok expressed, ‘suffering gives people a strong heart and faith.’²³³ The cross – suffering followed by victory – also serves as an idealised response. It is impossible to miss the imagery of southern Sudanese waving a symbol of death in the air during worship services reminding external observers of the tenuous Sudanese situation while also giving encouragement to internal participants to continue in the path laid before them. The symbolism of the cross then is equally witness to the outside world about the plight of Sudan, reminder to internal participants and a hope inspiring interpretation of strength and meaning.

The ability to grieve with hope can be clearly witnessed in the response of the churches to the sudden death of John Garang in 2005.²³⁴ Daniel Aketch explained:

²³¹ ‘Culture, in other words, is a process: it is forever emergent. This process can flourish or it can be stifled. When it flourishes, it yields meaning.’ E Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen, “Introduction,” in *Mistrusting Refugees*, eds. E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 2-3.

²³² Phillip Makueol, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²³³ Rachel Achoul Majok, member of ECS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

²³⁴ John Garang died in a helicopter crash returning to Sudan from Uganda on 30 July 2005. “Garang’s Son Mourns, Prepares for Funeral,” *Associated Press*, 5 August 2005, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 18 August 2005. Despite initial speculation an investigative

In the Episcopal Church when people are suffering like when Dr Garang passed away you know what Episcopal Church does? People come together and they sit and they arrange how can we counsel the people through this, people are now hopeless and people are feeling that there is no more hope. So what the Episcopal Church organised, they said that we should move around the camp informing people that anything that happens God has a purpose... So when people are suffering we say, Jesus said, "don't worry about today or even tomorrow, God has a plan for tomorrow..." So as an Episcopal we greet people so that they know God has a plan for them.²³⁵

In a tense situation that could have easily degenerated into conflict, especially with neighbouring Somali refugees, church leadership moved throughout the camp participating in communal mourning and pointing to a broader purpose in a way that helped refugees focus on meaning and hope. The above also represents the ability of the church to translate external events and ideals into internal realities in a method that allowed ongoing cultural adaptation and productivity with hope inspiring resonance.

Analysis and Conclusion

Sudanese refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp have experienced intense and rapid cultural confrontations. Many in Kakuma underwent a horrendous ordeal of trekking hundreds of miles through wilderness and burning sun helplessly watching as friends and family fell victim along the way. Anticipated safety in reaching the camp proved equally elusive as Kakuma betrayed the expectation of security. Food scarcity, hostile relations, debilitating climate, stripped dignity and loss of culture rippled shockwaves in the gathering community. It is in this context that the churches within Kakuma proved a powerful and potent force.

In the first instance churches offered a means of recreating society. Churches allowed Sudanese to organise themselves following patterns that reflected traditional values, principles and leadership priorities. Age-groupings and traditional patterns of proper social interaction and arrangements were loosely reconstituted in public and well attended worship services. Ceremonies, symbols, mourning rituals

team lead by US National Transportation Safety Board chief investigator Dennis Jones cleared the accident of any tampering or terrorism. "No Terrorism in Garang Crash," *The Monitor*, 10 September 2005, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 23 September 2005.

²³⁵ Daniel Aketch, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

and celebratory events further confirmed that the church more than any other local initiative was helping refugees create continuity critical to healthy development.

While expected that traditional religious practices and societal compositions would factor into contemporary Christian practice, in Kakuma this appears to be more a reflexive reaction than an intentional theological incorporation.²³⁶ Beyond hot topic issues like marital customs, church leaders do not appear to be theologically reflecting on contemporary practices and arrangements. This is in part because of the scarcity of leaders commissioned to help individuals transition into full membership. Among the main PCOS congregation in Zone 5 for example, church attendance regularly averages over 1000 adults. Only 384 are members of good standing²³⁷ and only evangelist John Riak is commissioned to prepare individuals for membership.²³⁸ The PCOS is certainly not alone in having an extensive membership process. In the ECS tradition it can take two to three years making the SPC appear relatively quick at an average of six months.²³⁹ In addition to expanding trained pastoral leadership, churches would benefit from a quicker membership process that taught candidates basic theological tenets and church doctrines. Though culturally sensitive biblical discernment is inherently difficult, the churches in Kakuma should engage in a more responsible theological assimilation.²⁴⁰ All the same, within the refugee camp the churches ability to recreate society has ultimately resulted in cultural continuity and communal stability.

The church has secondly beneficially impacted Kakuma by working to build peace within the public sphere. Challenging traditional patterns of ethnic exclusivity internal pastoral leadership supplemented by external resource networks utilised their

²³⁶ Though speaking in a different context the following observation by James Cox is equally relevant to Kakuma: 'The main characteristics of African indigenous religions persist in and through the variety of Christian denominations and movements found throughout the country.' James L Cox, "Characteristics of African Indigenous Religions in Contemporary Zimbabwe," in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion*, ed. Graham Harvey (London: Cassell, 2000), 230.

²³⁷ Peter Kai Nyon, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

²³⁸ After the evangelist is satisfied that the perspective candidate adequately understands proper PCOS doctrine and has memorized the important hymns and prayers the individual will be recommended to the pastor and ruling elder who will further vet the candidate.

²³⁹ Abraham Achuth, deacon of ECS, interview with author, 6 February 2006 and David Deng, SPC church leader, interview with author, 10 February 2006.

²⁴⁰ 'Spiritual discernment is a complex activity that operates at many levels relative to the various dimensions of life in which human beings exist.' Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 140.

offices to demonstrate the feasibility of peaceful cultural exchange and interaction. Pastoral teaching emphasising collective 'Christian' identity broadened local affiliations and therefore reciprocity and responsibility. At least initially initiated by church leadership, other groups such as inter-tribal women prayer groups and numerous individuals, further encouraged by education and urbanisation, themselves became the guardians of local peace that transformed an explosively hostile environment.

Dichotomised into the competing segments of Hong Kong and Baghdad, the churches response to destabilising clashes was critical in overcoming Kakuma polarisation though this response was often reactionary rather than proactive. For the most part institutional efforts to congeal inter-communal bonds and inter-denominational joint relationships have faltered outside of the context of emotive response to pressing difficulty. Solidifying bonds of mutual rapport necessitates more consistent and creative deliberations on the basis of a deeper exploration of cultural differences, historical memories and contemporary political possibilities. Appealing to a vague shared Christian religiosity has proved an effective psychological process that made 'social cohesion, co-operation and influence possible.'²⁴¹ However this appears to be in some senses a collective and shallow veneer laid over deeper divisions in order to facilitate peaceful coexistence. While important as a preparatory stage it is unclear that shared relationships on this basis alone will extend beyond the refugee experience. Nonetheless, in Kakuma the churches did build peaceful bridges between Hong Kong and Baghdad resulting in a more peaceful and united society on the basis of a new group categorisation and collective in-group.

The churches third impact on Kakuma was the modelling of social initiatives. Concerned with the holistic needs of the community the purview of the church extended to multiple areas of member's lives including economic and resource distribution. Progressive ideals originating from outside the community were also tentatively modelled. For example, criteria related to gender equality had little to no equivalent within traditional Sudanese society. Exposed to international NGOs and

²⁴¹ John C. Turner, Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher and Margaret S. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 40. 'The psychological group is precisely the adaptive mechanism that frees human beings from the restrictions of and allows them to be more than just individual persons' or in this case, independent ethnicities. Ibid., 67.

effectively forced to exist within their parameters, churches helped begin the process of internalising some of these understandings. For the most part this agenda did not originate within the church nor was it diligently pursued, as were efforts to ease ethnic boundaries. Furthermore within at least some of the churches debate was discouraged in lieu of conformity to schemas already set and to the primary benefit of existing male leadership. One ECS gentleman said for example, ‘we have what are called church doctrines. That is the ECS doctrine. Those are rules that should be followed. Whether you use your mother tongue you have to translate and follow those rules... They cannot be missed, the church doctrines.’²⁴² Churches within Kakuma need to more adequately engage through internal introspection and reflection a wider discourse even when it contests existing positions of leadership.

With that understanding, however, the limited models set by the churches were advantageous to the broader society as it exposed a greater number of individuals to the dialogue. In addition, as efficacy dictates that ‘the refugee needs to be a full participant in the formulation and reformulation of culture,’ the churches provided the only internally demarcated and administered social organisation where such models could be pursued to any great extent.²⁴³ In a culturally disruptive setting the limited models enacted within the churches prevented stagnation by encouraging a cultural revitalisation and an empowering hope-inspired understanding of the war and refugee setting.

The church therefore exerted an important and significant influence on Kakuma Refugee Camp. Churches, though not alone in their efforts, directly contributed to the development of physical peace and safety, encouraged cultural growth and provided the means for social stability and hope. The church furthermore built a new in-group categorisation on the basis of a loosely Christian civil religion extending between the various southern Sudanese tribes distributed throughout each of the camp zones. As the basis of a newly developing civil religion, within Kakuma, Christianity provided a ‘set of values and symbols which nearly everyone holds in common and to which everyone responds similarly.’²⁴⁴

²⁴² Phillip Makueol, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²⁴³ Daniel and Knudsen, “Introduction,” *Mistrusting Refugees*, 5.

²⁴⁴ Christianity thus fulfils Bellah’s classic definition of civil religion, Michael W Hughey, *Civil Religion and Moral Order: Theoretical and Historical Dimensions* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), 67.

This civil religion is a result of and a partial explanatory factor for the high impact of the local churches on the refugee camp and should be understood not as a set and controlling agenda but an underlying Sudanese sentiment only loosely Christian with at least one important result: greater political peace in the camp.²⁴⁵

Over and over focus group participants, church leaders and elected local political representatives acknowledged the deep impact of the church on the refugee camp. Alanya Joseph the Equatorian Chairman for example noted, 'I think the church has contributed in the community... They contributed a lot.'²⁴⁶ Peter Kwent the Bentiu Community Chairman among the Nuer explained that, 'church leaders also and the church elders they are involved... especially when there is a big problem in the community... The elders who are in the community and the pastors who are in the community can join together to solve that problem together. They play a large role in the community.'²⁴⁷

The strength of the influence of the church is clearly illustrated in the projected perception concerning the number of Christians within the camp. Though estimates varied as to the percentage of Christians within the camp, the average number offered by Sudanese was around seventy-five percent. While the smallest number given was fifty percent, numerous individuals emphasised that a great many more than seventy-five percent were Christian. One young Dinka man enthused, 'I am 100% [sure] where I am living we are all Christians.'²⁴⁸ When the Nuer court was asked to agree or disagree with this sentiment the head chief responded, 'we say that everybody is a Christian. But if you go the village you can get some non-Christians.'²⁴⁹ The secretary of the court affirmed this perspective stating, 'we have the mind of saying that we are all Christians.'²⁵⁰ Certainly this is not the full picture as realistically it can be assumed that a number of individuals choose not to identify with Christianity. Limitations regarding the utilised methodology and ability to

²⁴⁵ The concept of civil religion as it relates to southern Sudan will be more fully explored in Chapter Four.

²⁴⁶ Alanya Joseph, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

²⁴⁷ Peter Kwent, interview with author, 11 February 2006.

²⁴⁸ Daniel Aketch, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²⁴⁹ Kerbina Dul Myon, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

²⁵⁰ Peter Kuol Maket, secretary of Nuer court, interview with author, 14 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

communicate in ethnic dialects in addition to perceived dangers of admitting traditional practice, such as the need to occasionally perform acts outside of the camp, prevented a fuller exploration of this issue. What is of relevance is the perceived conformity to Christianity even when church leaders admitted that some individuals attending their congregation may not actually be practicing Christians. Only in Kakuma did such a strong perception of Christianity exist. In every other context visited and studied Christians freely acknowledged limitations to the Christian community and readily pointed out individuals who were not Christians. In none of the other contexts would the words of John Garang have been affirmed, 'those people who are not converted they don't have churches I could say maybe yes, though I cannot give an example of who and who and where does he worship. I cannot give an example. But the church has influenced people at the high range.'²⁵¹ This speaks to the strength of Christianity and the extent to which it forms a civil religion within Kakuma Camp. As Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar note, 'If enough individuals collectively undergo a personal experience of change sufficiently profound as to alter their very perception of who they really are... then the whole society may be said to have undergone a type of transformation... not merely a change but a qualitative re-ordering, a transformation.'²⁵² That is in Kakuma Refugee Camp while there are certainly individuals who are not Christian, the perceived strength and affiliation with Christianity testifies to a radically re-categorised in-group on the basis of a transforming Christian civil religion.

Though there are a number of reasons why Christianity has developed along these lines, as will be explored in Chapter Four, there is one particular rationale unique to Kakuma and relevant to understanding the strong development of Christianity throughout the camp. For the *raison d'être* of the camp – the sudden influx of thousands of 'lost boys' – is embedded in a mass social movement towards Christianity with roots that stretch to Ethiopia and an army of boys.

Drawn, forced or otherwise captured, an estimated 12,000 boys based in Ethiopia trained for the liberation of their nation. Alongside this children's army toiled a second force with little fanfare or connection to the broader world: the Sudanese church. Throughout the 1980s thousands of these boys turned to the

²⁵¹ John Garang, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²⁵² Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004), 168.

churches in large baptismal services joining the youth groups of especially the ECS and PCOS finding meaning and deeper camaraderie.²⁵³ The fall of Mengistu in 1991 saw the sudden expulsion of southern Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia. Having no where to go and no one to look after them many of these boys travelled as a group through hundreds of miles to Kenya and a refugee camp quickly designed to accommodate them by mid 1992. For many of the orphaned thousands that survived the ordeal 'their faith, their comradeship and the faithfulness of a Father God gave them a new sense of family, of belonging and of purpose.'²⁵⁴

The degree to which Kakuma is a unique setting sharply influenced from the very foundation and inception of the camp by a strong and persevering Christian spirituality cannot be overemphasised. The total disruption of social values and norms and loss of older male custodians and guardians radically altered the possibility of development that simply would not have been present in other settings. The influx of boys committed to each other, to unity and to the Bible would profoundly shape the character and context of Kakuma even as other refugees flocked to the camp. As many of these individuals are now in their late twenties and thirties and beginning families of their own, the effect will continue to be far reaching and ensures that within Kakuma, Christianity will continue to function as an active and shaping civil religion. This is summarised in the words of one of these young men, John Garang:

As you heard we were called lost boys. First of all we left many of our brothers and old mothers... but we heard that there is a God and a new life and we changed from African Traditional to what, to Christianity. So mostly it was initiated from that time up to this time. It has given us the courage to take the lead and how to [lead] our people.²⁵⁵

Imbued from the inception of Kakuma, Christianity has played a powerful role within the camp. It has helped recreate traditional patterns of society, built links of political peace and modelled needed social agendas. The church has created continuity, encouraged adaptability, developed a peaceful re-categorisation of ethnic perceptions, inspired hope and offered stability. While Christianity is certainly only

²⁵³ Andrew C Wheeler, "Finding Meaning Amid the Chaos: Narratives of Significance in the Sudanese Church," in *Religion and African Civil Wars*, ed. Niels Kastfelt (London: Hurst and Company, 2005), 58-9.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁵⁵ John Garang, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

one discourse in the camp it is the predominant narrative.²⁵⁶ One final illustration will demonstrate the ability of the churches to blend boundaries and extend political identification in the midst of a harsh reality.²⁵⁷

In 2005 the UN High Commissioner for Refugees gifted a number of bicycles to the Chairman of the Nuer community. Bicycles represent the primary mode of transportation and a significant means of income. They were to be distributed fairly throughout the community but were instead allocated solely to the extended family members of the political leadership. This action caused great anger and exacerbated a difficult situation. Feeling slighted the intended recipients decided to ‘beat the Chairman’ but ‘the Chairman also [had his] clan.’ The area quickly divided into competing segments that spilled into armed conflict that rocked Zone 5 for several days and resulted in several deaths. Kenyan police managed to separate the fighting groups but ‘separation of the problem is not the solution of the problem’ and the LWF security forces and peace and reconciliation programme refused to get involved. Recognising the tenuous nature of the problem church leaders decided to convene a special meeting that brought together all of the pastoral leadership across the denominations throughout the zone. The meeting was further supported by the presence of PCOS leadership from Lokichogio who came to reinforce the local ministers. During the meeting the church leaders declared the current political leadership invalid and created an interdenominational committee to recollect the bicycles. As one member of the appointed committee noted, ‘we need to organize ourselves for all these clashes because tribalism is something [you] need to think about it. Why, how can we take it away? How are we going to take it? It is like a disease. So if you don’t have the medicine for the disease it will kill you. But if you have the medicine then... it will go away.’²⁵⁸ After recollecting the bicycles the committee redistributed them equitably, held a new specially called election and elected a new chairman for the community. These efforts ended the violence,

²⁵⁶ ‘Far from being reducible to a closed system of signs and relations, the meaningful world is always fluid and ambiguous, a partially integrated mosaic of narratives, images, and signifying practices. Its forms – which are indivisibly semantic and material, social and symbolic – appear, paradoxically, to be at the same time (and certainly over time) coherent yet chaotic, authoritative yet arguable, highly systemic yet unpredictable, consensual yet internally contradictory.’ John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 30.

²⁵⁷ Though corroborated by several sources, the following story is taken mostly from the current Chairman of the Nuer community, James Rout Wour, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

achieved peace and solidified the importance of good governance in the community. In this way the sole Baptist pastor in Kakuma came to be the chairman of the second largest ethnicity in the camp.

The above story indicates that the church is able to cross numerous boundaries within the refugee camp on behalf of extending peace between and within Hong Kong and Baghdad. It illustrates one example of a successful effort by collective inter-denominational church leadership to increase political identification and model the social agenda of good governance. It also reveals the extent to which the community cedes moral authority and legitimacy to church leaders in a society underpinned by a Christian influenced civil religion. Finally, it foreshadows broader church developments within southern Sudan and as discussed in later chapters: continued the building of a loose civil religion, serving as bridge between oppressed civilians and the government and striving for peace while demanding democratic change. Unique to Kakuma Refugee Camp, the heartland for Sudanese refugees, the church was at the forefront of social cohesion, communal stabilisation and peace and societal development.

Chapter Three

Internally Displaced and Ugandan Refugees

A. On the Dusty Trails: The Internally Displaced of Khartoum

‘The displaced people... they were taken away from the cities to so called displaced camps. They were just like the camps in the Second World War which were called by other names.’

Thomas Melut²⁵⁹

‘Many people came to Christ here. Before they were not Christians, they did not believe, but when they moved here they were under a difficult position in the displaced camps and they came to know Christ.’

Viviana Aluda²⁶⁰

Located on the confluence of the muddy banks of the Blue and White Nile hundreds of thousands of southern Sudanese struggle in the shadows of a Khartoum that represents both the oasis of secure modernity and the dryness of segregated racial disintegration intimately tied to a long memory of ancestral slavery.²⁶¹ Though slavery has long since ceased to officially exist its currents still permeate this capital city. As one scholar noted, ‘the issues here relate to colour, race, superiority/inferiority – the whole nexus of ideas and prejudices that can be

²⁵⁹ Thomas Melut, Principal of Nile Theological College and former MP of the Government of Sudan, interview with author, 16 March 2006, Khartoum.

²⁶⁰ Viviana Aluda, member of ECS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

²⁶¹ By the mid-nineteenth century estimates indicate that more than ten thousand slaves per annum were transported through Khartoum. James McCarthy, *Selim Aga: A Slave's Odyssey* (Edinburgh: Luath Press Limited, 2006), 62. Many early European officials and missionaries ‘redeemed’ individuals by purchasing and sending them to Europe for religious training though this practice was criticised, as were modern endeavours, out of ‘fears that it merely colluded with the slave trade.’ Andrew C. Wheeler, “Freed Slaves and the Origins of the Sudanese Church,” in *Announcing the Light: Sudanese Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 18.

subsumed under the rubric, racism. Northern Sudanese society is profoundly racist and colour-conscious.’²⁶²

Outside observers often query the enigma of a flowering Khartoum in the midst of what has been viewed as an ‘ignorant,’ ‘misguided,’ ‘warlike’ or more recently ‘oppressed’ rural population. Dated only in brand names, one early missionary described, ‘Khartoum is quite a modern city... You can, at a price, get everything you need for living in the Sudan – groceries and dress suits, golf clubs and enamel ware... and some very good local apologies for “Woolworths.”’²⁶³ Just as accurate today one travelogue near the turn of the twentieth century described, ‘here were Arabs of all shades of colour from ebony black to white. Negroes of many tribes. Mohammedans nearly all... White seemed to be the prevailing colour for the men, while most of the women were draped in two-piece garments of a curious shade of soft blue.’²⁶⁴ Modern day Khartoum continues this legacy of mixed luxury. As *haboob*’s swirl on the desert edge the elite few and foreign expatriates enjoy espressos and ice cream at the Ozone café, drive in new \$165,000 BMWs and surf wireless internet and satellite TV on flat panel plasma screens.²⁶⁵ The *Economist* perhaps summed this best, “Khartoum: An Island Unto Itself.”²⁶⁶

If Khartoum is an island it is a small one sitting on a turbulent volcano. The nearly two million southern Sudanese displaced by war, poverty and hunger are neither welcome or if possible, even noticed.²⁶⁷ Forced to the margins the displaced often live far from the cultural and economic hubs that comprise the triad of greater Khartoum: Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman. In a programme called *kasha* the Government of Sudan sought to undermine security by bulldozing southern

²⁶² R.S. O’Fahey, “‘They are Slaved, But Yet Go Free’: Some Reflections on Sudanese History,” in *Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999*, eds. Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 55.

²⁶³ D.N. MacDiarmid, *Tales of the Sudan* (Melbourne: Sudan United Mission, 1934), 41-2.

²⁶⁴ Radclyffe A. Dugmore, *The Vast Sudan* (London: Arrowsmith, 1924), 59.

²⁶⁵ “Far Away from Darfur’s Agony, Khartoum is Booming,” *New York Times*, 24 October 2006, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 26 October 2006.

²⁶⁶ “Khartoum: An Island Unto Itself,” *Economist*, 7 August 2006, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 21 September 2006.

²⁶⁷ Officially the UNHCR has oversight over 1,976,000 IDPs in Khartoum though they estimate that there may be as many as 3,765,000 IDPs in the greater Khartoum area. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Appeal 2007 – Sudan,” *UNHCR* (December 2006), 119; available from <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4554439d0.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 22 August 2007.

encampments, forcibly relocating displaced to increasingly distant settings and targeted destruction of church buildings. One scholar noted that between April 1991 and 1993 more than 400,000 displaced individuals were forced to flee into the desert areas outside of greater Khartoum.²⁶⁸ A UN report noted that in August 2006 without warning the Government of Sudan demolished 12,000 homes in the displaced camp of Dar Assalam.²⁶⁹ Even when forced to begrudgingly acknowledge the existence of IDP camps, ‘the government was unwilling to provide such services lest the displaced get the wrong idea that their occupation of these parts of the cities was condoned by the government.’²⁷⁰ Bona Malwal, the former editor-in-chief of *The Sudan Times*, a daily English newspaper in Khartoum emphasised:

If the government of the northern community were to regard these people, [southerners], as Sudanese citizens of the same country as people for whom they must care, the impact on the rest of the country would have been stunning. But these people are not seen like that. These are wretched, poor, hungry people who live on the outskirts of Khartoum and are viewed by the northern Sudanese as different from them.²⁷¹

Racial feelings of disdain mingled with fear enabled the government to utilise the presence of the displaced as a political means of shoring support for an increasingly costly war against southerners often portrayed as subjects to external influence eager for northern rescuing. Political calculations underlined by racial and religious machinations, therefore, resulted in a systemic psychological reinforcement of minority status to southern Sudanese displaced to their capital city.

In 1989 as an ideological wall was demolished in Berlin, the National Islamic Front (NIF) was quietly laying the foundation for a religious movement that would soon have global reverberations.²⁷² Standing behind these efforts seasoned in

²⁶⁸ Johnathan Bascom, “‘Internal Refugees’: The Case of the Displaced in Khartoum,” in *Geography and Refugees: Patterns and Processes of Change*, eds. Richard Black and Vaughan Robinson (London: Belhaven Press, 1993), 40. For more on the *kasha* programme see also “Sudan: Refugees in Their Own Country,” *Africa Watch* 4, no. 10 (July 1992): 1-24.

²⁶⁹ “UN Demands End to Demolitions, Forced Relocation,” *UN News Centre*, 17 August 2006, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 21 September 2006. Ironically, Dar Assalam translates as ‘the place of peace.’

²⁷⁰ Jok Madut Jok, *War and Slavery in Sudan*, 73.

²⁷¹ Bona Malwal, “The Unreported War,” in *War Wounds: Development Costs of Conflict in Southern Sudan, Sudanese People Report on Their War*, eds. Nigel Twose and Benjamin Pogrund (London: Panos Publications, 1988), 111.

²⁷² 1989 also saw the introduction of the now famous ‘third wave’ of African democratisation. Crawford Young, “The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa: Ambiguities and Contradictions,” in *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, ed. Richard Joseph (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 15-38.

political realities and with a reputation of scholarly religious innovation was Hassan al-Turabi and he brought to the militarily-backed ruler Omar Bashir two committed rising stars: Ali Osman Taha and Nafi Ali Nafi. As the NIF struggled to establish Islamic purity in governance, the next decade in Sudan witnessed the bloodiest escalation of the war in the south and the most intense repression of southerners displaced to Khartoum.²⁷³

Beginning in Khartoum this new government commenced a policy of internal realignment and repression to enforce an ideologically Islamic-driven agenda. Towards this end multiple internal security agencies were established such as the *Amm ath Thwara* which had 'their own arms networks and command operations, and [were] generally responsible for the practice of detainment-release-redetainment in unofficial prisons ("ghost houses") that has characterized NIF's response to its opponents.'²⁷⁴ By 1993 Nafi was overseeing State Security and forty-two known 'ghost houses' in Khartoum alone.²⁷⁵

Turabi focused on external relations attempting to secure for himself and Sudan a prominent role in the Middle Eastern world by using Sudan as a sanctuary for worldwide militant Islamists.²⁷⁶ In 1991 Hamas opened an office in Khartoum and at Turabi's invitation Osama bin Laden moved to Sudan '[marrying] Turabi's

²⁷³ For Turabi's pragmatic Islamic ideology and political ascendancy see Abdelwahab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991); Raghid El-Solh, "Islamist Attitudes Towards Democracy: A Review of the Ideas of Al-Ghazali, Al-Turabi and 'Amara," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (1993): 57-63. Turabi appears to have been particularly influenced by his 1960s doctoral education in law at *La Sorbonne*, Paris.

²⁷⁴ T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 64.

²⁷⁵ Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Sudan – Contested National Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 137.

²⁷⁶ Historically Riverine elite have attempted to associate themselves with the broader Middle Eastern region. For key contemporary developments related to this region see Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East* (London: Viking, 1991; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 2003), 339-406 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Sudanese, however, have often been marginalised by the Middle Eastern region: 'Northerner's think of themselves as Arabs, whereas the Arabs think otherwise.' Al-Baqira al-Afif Mukhtar, "The Crisis of Identity in Northern Sudan: A Dilemma of a Black People with a White Culture," a paper presented at the CODESRIA African Humanities Institute tenured by the Programme of African Studies at Northwestern University (undated and unpublished), p. 11, Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi. For example, due to Khartoum's support of Iraq during the Gulf War Saudi Arabia expelled all Sudanese immigrants. David Pratten, *Return to the Roots? Migration, Local Institutions and Development in Sudan* (Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 2000), 27.

niece as his third wife.’²⁷⁷ By the middle of the 90s Turabi had bridged the divide between Iraq and Iran forming an ‘Iraq-Iran-Sudan axis... forged by secret agreements’²⁷⁸ as well as ‘[brokering] a truce between al Qaeda and Saddam.’²⁷⁹ This allegiance freed the Sudanese government to purchase weapons and vengefully pursue its own civil war.

Interpersonal rivalries centred on several key events, however, began unravelling the internal unity of Bashir, Turabi, Taha and Nafi. In 1994 Bashir extracted significant military-support enhancements from the French government in exchange for Illich Ramirez Sanchez. Known worldwide as ‘Carlos the Jackal,’ Sanchez had been personally invited and settled in Khartoum by Turabi and Nafi.

In 1995 Taha and Nafi helped plan and pay for a failed assassination attempt on the Egyptian President Mubarak in Addis Ababa.²⁸⁰ This coincided with an increasingly desperate financial situation in Khartoum that forced the internal security apparatus under Nafi to use deadly force to suppress a riot of 15,000 students.²⁸¹ Re-evaluating the political situation Bashir fired Nafi and a year later forced bin Laden to leave Sudan on 18 May 1995.

In 1996 Turabi was appointed Speaker of the Parliament shifting his attention to the Sudanese political situation and repositioning Nafi within the NIF political organisation. Already isolated internationally, for Bashir the final straw came in August 1998 when the United States bombed the al-Shifa chemical plant based on the outskirts of Khartoum on accusations that the plant was producing VX nerve gas.²⁸² By the end of the following year Turabi was arrested, Taha had been promoted to first vice president and Nafi was retained in the NIF political party apparatus. Bashir, with reconfirmed support from the military, repositioned Sudan

²⁷⁷ Millard J. Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989-2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 70.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁷⁹ Daniel Benjamin and Seven Simon, *The Next Attack: The Globalization of Jihad* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), 153.

²⁸⁰ According to the official Sudanese Governmental statement, ‘the Sudan has not and will not allow its territory to be used as a source of any act of terror or to be used as a shelter for terrorists.’ *The Assassination Attempt on the Life of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak* (New York: Sudan Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 1995), paragraph 103.

²⁸¹ Millard Burr and Robert Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan*, 196.

²⁸² Daniel Benjamin and Simon Seven, *The Next Attack*, 132.

economically, internationally, militarily and though still committed to Islamic primacy, less concerned with strict Islamic purity.

This period of attempted purification and internal Islamic realignment affected southern Sudanese displaced to Khartoum in several key ways. First, as already noted, Khartoum's displaced were subjected to intermittent seizures and destruction of property. As one long-term critic living in Khartoum noted, 'it is now the rule, rather than the exception, for public funds and property to be misappropriated.'²⁸³ One result was that 'refugees in Khartoum were from time to time rounded up and evicted to the countryside.'²⁸⁴ This policy stood in stark contrast to the government's treatment of neighbouring refugees seeking safety in Sudan²⁸⁵ and was part of a broader strategy to intentionally undermine and destabilise southern economies and environments.²⁸⁶

Second, southerners routinely faced harassment, imprisonment and with forced economic exclusion, sustenance on irregular petty jobs, crime, sex and the selling of alcohol. Many southern Sudanese women turned to brewing as a means of basic provision. Criminalised under *sharia* the NIF unleashed a fury of internal cleansing in order to establish social purity with women caught selling beer usually beaten and fined. Police either confiscated monetary or material goods to pay the fine or subjected the women with whatever small children and infants were present to harsh indeterminate lengths of imprisonment.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Bona Malwal, "Proposals for Peace, Recovery and Development in the Horn of Africa," in *Beyond Conflict in the Horn: The Proposals for Peace, Recovery and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan*, eds. Martin Doornbos, Lionel Cliffe, Abdel Ghafter M. Ahmed and John Markakis (The Hague: The Institute of Social Studies, 1992), 12.

²⁸⁴ Gaim Kibreab, "Refugees in the Sudan: Unresolved Issues," in *African Refugees: Development Aid and Repatriation*, eds. Howard Adelman and John Sorenson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 52.

²⁸⁵ For an in-depth review of the Sudanese refugee policy see Ahmed Karadawi, *Refugee Policy in Sudan, 1967-1984* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999).

²⁸⁶ For example, around Renk the Government of Sudan regularly deployed individuals from the north to work in deforesting the area by creating charcoal funnelled to Khartoum markets. Cindi Katz, "Fueling War: A Political-Ecology of Poverty and Deforestation in Sudan," in *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa*, eds. Vigdis Broch-Due and Richard A. Schroeder (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab, 2000), 321-39.

²⁸⁷ In 1994, for example, 'various sources confirm that 2,000 women [were] serving sentences for brewing or selling beer in the Sharia prison of Khartoum.' Jan Gruiters and Efreem Tresoldi, *Sudan, a Cry for Peace: Report of a Pax Christi International Mission January 1994* (Brussels: Pax Christi International, 1994), 47. It was not only women caught and imprisoned for specifically breaching *sharia* legalities. For a short testimony regarding the five years of Bishop Henry Riak's incarceration without charge see Samuel Kayanga, "Miracles in the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, The Testimony of Bishop Henry Riak," in "*But God is Not Defeated!*" *Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal*

A third impact on displaced Sudanese in Khartoum was the prevention of



**Figure 14 – Sudan Council of Churches
Khartoum Headquarters**

extended external aid and services from NGOs and the UN by the Government of Sudan.²⁸⁸

Admittedly though the UNHCR has attempted to resist the incorporation of IDPs into its mandate,²⁸⁹ Sudan, at the time hosting the ‘world’s largest internally displaced population’ was an exception.²⁹⁰ There was however one important exemption to the government’s external blockade: Middle Eastern Islamic charities. These NGOs were allowed complete access with the hope that food relief, medical aid and minor material distribution would be accompanied by Islamic conversion.

Largely funded by external donors the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) was also allowed to provide a limited number of services to the internally displaced. For example, one 1996 report described that during the first six months the eight SCC clinics in greater Khartoum had an ‘average attendance per clinic per day from 90-150 patients with a total of 52,989 cases.’²⁹¹

Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 135-6. In 1985 Mahmud Muhammad Taha, leader of the Islamic political organisation Republican Brothers, pioneered an Islamic theological approach open to democracy and modern day human rights legislation and was consequently executed for apostasy. Gerhard Lichtenthaler, “In the Sudan 1956-1985: The Case of Mahmud Muhammad Taha and the Republican Brothers,” in *Seeking an Open Society: Inter-Faith Relations and Dialogue in Sudan Today*, ed. Stuart E. Brown (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 37-60.

²⁸⁸ Johnathan Bascom, “‘Internal Refugees:’ The Case of the Displaced in Khartoum” in *Geography and Refugees*, 42.

²⁸⁹ The UNHCR is only ‘willing to play an expanded role when the links between refugees and IDPs are strong and when serious protection problems require the Office’s expertise.’ Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics: A Perilous Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 356.

²⁹⁰ Hiram A. Ruiz, “The Sudan: Cradle of Displacement,” in *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced*, eds. Roberta Cohen and Francis M. Deng (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), 141.

²⁹¹ Sudan Council of Churches, *Sudan Council of Churches 1996 Mid-Year Report* (Khartoum: Sudan Council of Churches, 1996), 52.

Though the SCC was present its influence was limited and its activities were monitored.²⁹² This was part of an effort by the Government of Sudan to psychologically impose its dominance on southerners while weakening venues of resistance and removing barriers to Islamic advancement. As Lillian Craig Harris, the wife of a recent British Ambassador to Sudan avowed, ‘what does exist is widespread opportunistic violence against the helpless by those in positions of power.’²⁹³ This is clearly elucidated in the destruction of church buildings and property among the displaced in Khartoum. For example, ‘it was in Karton Kassala [Hajj Yusuf] that a road was built through 20 preaching and teaching centres of the Catholic Church. It seems to have been deliberate to run a road which went through 20 centres located in different areas.’²⁹⁴ Though there are a number of examples of targeted church property destruction analysing one occasion will suffice.²⁹⁵

All Saints Cathedral is located on Street One, Amarat section directly across from a restaurant called ‘Delicious.’²⁹⁶ All Saints is the predominant Episcopal worship centre in Khartoum comprised almost entirely of displaced southerners. On New Year’s Eve 2006 All Saints held a



Figure 15 – All Saints Cathedral, Khartoum

²⁹² While overt observation of the SCC by the government has now gone ‘underground,’ it is still present and tangible. Kenneth Duku, SCC Coordinator for Emergency Relief, interview with author, 23 March 2006, Khartoum.

²⁹³ Lillian Craig Harris, *In Joy and in Sorrow: Travels among Sudanese Christians* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 17.

²⁹⁴ Ezekiel Kutjok, “Christian-Muslim Inter-Religious Dialogue: Sudanese Experiences and Thoughts,” in *Seeking an Open Society: Inter-Faith Relations and Dialogue in Sudan Today*, ed. Stuart E. Brown (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 70. Kutjok was the General Secretary of the SCC for 11 years.

²⁹⁵ In addition to church destruction, when attempting to acquire a permit for church construction, ‘such requests are invariably denied on the grounds that buildings of that type cannot be allowed in areas where Muslims constitute a majority.’ Taisier Mohammed A. Ali, “Reflections on Religion & the Post Colonial State in the Sudan: What is Mine is Mine and What is Yours is Negotiable,” in *Self-Determination, The Oil and Gas Sector and Religion and the State in the Sudan*, (London: African Renaissance Institute and Relationships Foundation International, 2002), 217.

²⁹⁶ The following is based primarily on Sylvester Thomas, Canon of All Saints Cathedral Khartoum, interview with author 3 March 2007, Khartoum. See also “Tear-Gassing at Sudan Cathedral Leaves Six Hurt,” *Agence France-Presse*, 2 January 2007, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 2 January 2007.

midnight 'watch service,' an event peacefully practiced for more than twenty-two consecutive years, though on this occasion four police cars positioned themselves so that they faced the main entrance to the Cathedral. About twenty minutes after midnight gun shots were heard outside the church and several minutes later as George Maker, Secretary for First Vice President Salva Kiir stood to read the evening's first scripture a tear gas canister was launched into the Cathedral.

Panicking, many within the congregation rushed for the back door leading through Canon Sylvester Thomas' office. In their haste several individuals were knocked down and trampled as others raced for safety. In full vestments Thomas rushed towards the entrance of the Cathedral to speak to what was now obviously police continuing to shoot into All Saints. As he ran he saw a small boy sitting in a plastic chair hit directly in the stomach by a tear gas canister knocking him to the ground and setting the chair on fire. Several fragments from the canister lodged in his legs requiring medical attention. After briefly stopping to help, Thomas reached the police, demanded that they desist and then called the local branch of the SPLA on his mobile. When the police heard this conversation they quickly retreated to their cars and left the scene. Within twenty minutes SPLA members had arrived in civilian clothes and deployed themselves around the Cathedral compound remaining throughout the night patrolling, as did several hundred members of the congregation.

Altogether the police fired ten tear gas canisters into the packed Cathedral from a distance of less than twelve feet. Inspection the following morning also revealed the presence of several bullets shot from a pistol into the congregation. The sound system, the Cathedral's only computer and a number of pews and chairs were ruined by the attack leading to approximately £3,500-4,000 worth of damage.

The day after the incident the Deputy Governor arrived and spoke to a group gathered outside the sanctuary explaining that the police were chasing some youths causing trouble that had run into the sanctuary. Thomas disputed this claim explaining that individuals at the door noted no such young men entering the sanctuary and that furthermore, although the attackers were in a police car, their uniform was not that of the police but of one of the Popular Defence Forces. Despite

an investigation, evidence collected and a promise given to repay the damage, nothing concrete has yet transpired and no money has been received by All Saints.²⁹⁷

In a letter written to the Governor of Khartoum State, Right Reverend Ezekiel Kondo, ECS Bishop of the Diocese of Khartoum, noted that this was not the first attack on the Cathedral:

The ECS/Diocese of Khartoum has passed through very difficult times as you remember in 2001 during Easter Celebration, when the police forces attacked “All Saints Cathedral” with hundred troops and as a result of that “156” people were sentenced to prison, nine (9) girls were lashed, one person lost his right eye and one person lost his right hand by “hand grenade”, let alone the emotional effects. Many were traumatized because of these events.²⁹⁸

The above highlights several interrelated themes pertinent to displaced southerners in Khartoum. First, in spite of recent positive developments towards religious freedom, persecution and harassment remains latently present with sporadic outbreaks in violence. Second, multiple security agencies with competing loyalties to feuding governmental officials sufficiently obscure judicial proceedings granting even low-level officers virtual immunity. This trend has been recently compounded by the development of more extreme Islamic elements within Khartoum.²⁹⁹ Third, displaced southerners subjected to constant racial inequities live as a powerless subset with a negative social categorisation involving ethnic, economic and religious elements constantly imposed on them. For southerners the cumulative result is a disjointed experience, the reinforced ‘otherness’ of minority status and constant fear of detention, torture and robbery preventing development of connected stability despite years of residence. Ultimately however, this constant repression stimulated the growth of the church and the utilisation of Christianity as a vehicle for cultural endurance and sanctity as well as a means for expressing resistant communal

²⁹⁷ As the attack on All Saints illustrates multiple security agencies undermine institutions of good governance and often directly impinge on the religious freedom of minority religions. They are ‘dangerous developments which should be contained.’ A. H. Abdel Salam and Alex de Waal, eds. *The Phoenix State: Civil Society and the Future of Sudan* (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2001), 14.

²⁹⁸ Right Reverend Ezekiel Kondo to Honourable Excellency Dr Abdelhalim Ismail Almota’fi, 1 January 2007, Electronic Mail, transcript, personal communication with author, accessed on 6 January 2007.

²⁹⁹ The most startling example of this development was the decapitation of the Sudanese newspaper editor of the daily *Al-Wifaq*, Mohammed Taha Mohammed Ahmed by a group claiming to be a local al-Qaeda branch. “Sudanese Slained Editor ‘Slaughtered like Camels’ – Justice Minister,” *Associated Press*, 23 November 2006, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 23 November 2006; “Qaeda ‘Leader’ Claims Beheading of Sudan Editor,” *Reuters*, 12 September 2006, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 23 September 2006.

politicisation. This development is clearly demonstrated among displaced southerners grouped into one corner of greater Khartoum.

Hajj Yusuf: From ‘Carton’ Kassala Squatter Settlement to Hai El Baraka, ‘The Place of Blessing’

The smell of bricks baking in the hot sun as black smoke trails into the air greets the senses as one crosses the bridge over the banks of the Blue Nile. Stretching beyond these homemade kilns to the east of Khartoum as the lone paved road turns into hardened dirt on the very edge of the desert is a sprawling area known as Hajj Yusuf. Located approximately fifteen kilometres from Khartoum, Hajj Yusuf is today a semi-urban suburb of mixed northern and southern ethnicities dominated by the majority Riverine Arabs.³⁰⁰

The history of this region stems from the thousands of southern Sudanese who fleeing war and famine sought refuge in their capital city. With an estimated forty percent of those who attempted this journey ‘lost on the way,’ southerners reached Khartoum only to find that stability would be just as elusive here.³⁰¹ Congregating on the fringes, ignored by their own government, obscured from international aid, southerners claimed for themselves in spontaneous settlements whatever space they could. One such area came to be known as ‘Carton’ or ‘Kartoun’ Kassala, ‘from the thousands of shacks built from whatever refuse could be salvaged, this site offered no health clinic, no school and no clean water.’³⁰² One northerner described:

Kassala squatter settlement had been a closed area in history. It was difficult to penetrate because the huts, arbors and shanties, which were made of cardboard were inaccessible. Streets were non-existent. Walking was only possible striding over people. The shanties were infested with extended families crammed in narrow spaces. It was difficult to define

³⁰⁰ Out of the total population of the displaced in Hajj Yusuf approximately 25% are Dinka, 21% Fur, 12% Shilluk, 6% Nuba, 6% Bari and 3% Nuer. Sharaf Eldin Ibrahim Bannaga, *Peace and the Displaced in Sudan: The Khartoum Experience* (Zurich: Habitat Group at the School of Architecture, 2002), 133.

³⁰¹ Sharon Elaine Hutchinson, “‘Food Itself is Fighting With Us.’ A Comparative Analysis of the Impact of Sudan’s Civil War on South Sudanese Civilian Populations Located in the North and the South,” in *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa*, ed. Vigdis Broch-Due (London: Routledge, 2005), 140.

³⁰² Richard Black and Vaughan Robinson, *Geography and Refugees*, 37.

the number of people living in the squatter settlements or in a single shanty for their intermingling and incessant ant-like movement. Environment surroundings were of very bad quality.³⁰³

Around 1992 the Ministry of Engineering Affairs decided to redevelop Hajj Yusuf, demolishing much of Carton Kassala and removing many of its residents to more distant now official camps for the displaced. IDPs who had managed to more permanently integrate themselves into the local community were allowed to stay and were even given legal plots of land for development. One of the displaced recalled that at that time of the destruction ‘we just came together to pray and fast and suddenly the authorities... [said] we are not going to demolish the area but we are going to give the plots to the citizens so that they remain in Baraka. And the name, the name should be changed [from] Carton to Baraka.’³⁰⁴

With this experience in mind the displaced who remained organised into tribal clusters and ‘created a committee to supervise and organize installation of newcomers, resist efforts to expropriate their land, and mediate conflicts within the community... The committee made construction according to official norms its ultimate goal, hoping to... obtain the recognition of the Ministry of Housing.’³⁰⁵ As displaced and the very poor arrived seeking shelter the community grew eastward into the desert, squatting on uninhabited land and maintaining a building code centred on constructing small mud brick homes in organised blocks. Over time as Khartoum itself grew these low level homes were bought and replaced with more upscale accommodation with portions of Hajj Yusuf regularised and integrated into the nearby culture and livelihood of the capital. For the majority of displaced southerners, however, this process has resulted in forced settlement deeper in the desert. It has furthermore incorporated and subverted southern identity and culture into a predominant Arabic framework that leaves southerners more disconnected, marginalised, anxious about thin legal claims to plots of land and open to fear, oppression and instability.

³⁰³ Sharaf Bannaga, *Peace and the Displaced in Sudan*, 124.

³⁰⁴ Stanley Khamis, church secretary of ECS Hajj Yusuf and Director of Salvation Mission Sudan, interview with author, 21 March 2006, Khartoum.

³⁰⁵ Richard Black and Vaughan Robinson, *Geography and Refugees*, 39.

While Hajj Yusuf is certainly only one among many areas of displaced southerners throughout Sudan, it remains an important one.³⁰⁶ For the thesis it serves as an internal balance to the external rural case studies stemming from the highly organised and regulated Kakuma Refugee Camp and the more loosely assisted community of OIji Refugee Camp in Uganda. Furthermore it allows the thesis to explore from the perspective of southern Sudanese Christian spirituality and institutions one specific theme that is especially pertinent in Khartoum. That is, how does close interaction with northern Arabic Muslims intersect with the development of peace, reconciliation and the politicisation of the church?

In general it is important to again note that urban self-settlement forces refugees to regularly interact with the structures, boundaries and culture of the dominant host community. The political efforts to initiate a cleansed Islamic community within Khartoum accompanied with underlying racist pejoratives has set the framework in which southern coping strategies must be formed and articulated. While the physical arrangements and order of worship of Hajj Yusuf churches is fairly similar to that described in Chapter Two, the effect on participating communicants is not exact.³⁰⁷ In Khartoum while the church does help reconstitute traditional structures, arrangements and values, this impact is less significant on the community due to the overriding imposition of the Arabic culture. All the same while the displaced 'are well aware of their powerlessness in the face of ongoing wars and political conflicts, they are nonetheless agents in creating their own meanings in the world in which they have been cast.'³⁰⁸ In Hajj Yusuf the church has increased communal stability and internal southern reconciliation by empowering displaced southerners to generate responses to arisen needs, convey necessary sacredness during life hardships and offer a form of articulated political resistance to the dominant discourse. That is, the church has significantly impacted displaced southerners in Hajj Yusuf in two predominant ways.

³⁰⁶ Many of the predominant towns in Sudan saw a sharp increase in the number of displaced inhabitants. For a critical examination of international aid to displaced southerners in one such area in southern Darfur see Mark Duffield, "Aid and Complicity: The Case of War-Displaced Southerners in Northern Sudan," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 40 (March 2002): 83-104.

³⁰⁷ See especially Chapter Two, 'Recreating Society,' 42-54.

³⁰⁸ Elizabeth M Coker, "Dislocated Identity and the Fragmented Body: Discourses of Resistance among Southern Sudanese Refugees in Cairo," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 17, no. 4 (2004): 402.

Bestowing Cultural and Practical Sacredness during Life Transitions

With hands raised, voices join in unison to sing, proclaim and praise. Gathered under a simple makeshift shelter in a crowded Muslim neighbourhood the faithful have come seeking healing, strength, encouragement and advice. Their desire is to ‘experience something new,’ a divine filling that will filter into the week ahead. Like many other gatherings spread throughout the area the group originated in a personal conversion, in this case of Joseph Loro who in 1999 attended a large Pentecostal meeting in Bahari Omdurman where he was ‘born again.’³⁰⁹ Invited friends and neighbours eventually coalesced into a regular small group that over time outgrew Loro’s home, employed a full time pastor and rented a small plot of land from a Muslim family.³¹⁰ The name of the church perhaps best symbolises their joint aspirations, ‘Victory Bible Fellowship,’ each word critical in understanding the importance of this small Pentecostal church in one corner of Hajj Yusuf.

Moving from cultural periphery to central axis, for many southern Sudanese displaced to Hajj Yusuf the first impact of the churches on communal stability is the churches’ ability to function as an internal culturally sanctifying agent that extends practical suggestions and divine sacredness to the southern community during key life transitions. That is the community turns inward to the church rather than the church shaping the broader external culture. As such the church is concerned with an authentic internal spirituality accessible to the community at key life transitions as can be evidenced in four ways.



**Figure 16 – Victory Bible Fellowship,
Khartoum**

³⁰⁹ Joseph Loro, member of SPC Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 19 March 2006, Khartoum.

³¹⁰ On 19 March 2006, for example, church attendance was twenty women, seven men, six youth and thirty children for a total of sixty-three. Utilising the family as a basic building block and tool for evangelism is fairly common throughout the displaced camps in Khartoum. Oliver Duku noted for example that almost all of the churches in the displaced area of Mayo were started in a similar fashion. Oliver Duku, “The Development and Growth of Mayo Congregations,” in *Land of Promise: Church Growth in a Sudan at War*, ed. Andrew Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 46.

First, as was displayed at Victory Bible Fellowship, the ability of the churches to enable new internal spiritual access that grants divine sacredness can be evidenced at a corporate ecumenical level by the growing influence of Pentecostalism throughout Hajj Yusuf on church worship and practice. Though all of the churches experienced growth during the 1990s, often in direct relation to the intensity of applied persecution, underneath the radar the more lasting development concerned the growth in influence of Pentecostal focus, style and methodology among the youth. Fermo Ogilla, the former General Overseer of Sudan Pentecostal Church (SPC)-North explained:

There was what we call Young Christian Fellowship, YCF, and it was this YCF was actually mainly pushed by the... leading preachers of the Pentecostal [Church]... It is the Catholics, the Anglicans, all of these churches where the young people [joined] what is called the YCF that were very much affected by this Pentecostal kind of preaching, praying practically and so we had a revival. But when it broke off it was not only among the Pentecostals though the Pentecostal [Church] played a very big role, a very big role in most of the churches.³¹¹

Transported from Juba to Khartoum in 1983 the YCF is an ecumenical movement aimed at strengthening the existing churches. Gaining public prominence in the 90s though leadership rotated among the denominations, 'the Christian experience offered was powerful and transforming, and so a distinctly Pentecostal form of youth religion was carried into all the Churches, including those like the Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church and the African Inland Church where Pentecostal teaching was virtually unknown.'³¹² Kenneth Duku of the SCC further confirmed the influence of Pentecostalism throughout the displaced areas noting:

There are new churches which are coming... For instance there are practical churches like what they call Pentecostal. People like to go I think because of music and there are some activities which people like, like the full gospel whereby people pray. We had Abunnke who came here and he was healing people and so on. And in the small way some of these [Pentecostal] churches are doing the same way and people prefer to go... And [so] that one also affects you know the congregations in these traditional churches.³¹³

The youth who regularly attended these social clubs imbibed a fresh sense of internal spiritual vigour that they often enthusiastically carried back to their own church. As one Presbyterian leader described, 'the youth were mobilised by this revivalism... In Khartoum, therefore most of the youth become Christian and at the

³¹¹ Fermo Ogilla, former General Overseer of SPC-North and pastor of Khartoum International Centre, interview with author, 18 March 2006, Khartoum.

³¹² Roland Werner, William Anderson, Andrew Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment*, 605.

³¹³ Kenneth Duku, interview with author, 23 March 2006.

same time they begin to preach. So some of them will go to the trips, some of them will go to visitation and so on and this is how people came together, how they came to Christ.’³¹⁴ However some of the churches were not accommodating and rejected the new youth impetus either retaining through discipline or evicting the youth if they refused to desist. Those who were evicted often planted their own churches sometimes under the banner of the SPC.³¹⁵

Though numerical church growth was often a political response, internal church renewal was carried on by youth often seeking to implement new theology and strategies that replaced established hierarchies and emphasis that had in many ways replicated traditional structures. The result was a weakening of the ability of the church to strictly maintain societal patterns and mutually reinforcing cultural norms that emphasised united conformity and respectful acceptance as was clearly seen in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Although such elements are present in Hajj Yusuf, it was perhaps inevitable that traditional elder hierarchies – ethnic, Christian or otherwise – would weaken in Khartoum where southerners were forced to adapt to a dominant culture that sought to consistently discredit those authorities. Unable to significantly alter the broader cultural paradigm shifted the churches’ focus to providing practical spiritual guidance to a struggling community. Though small the Pentecostal church was best positioned to effectively serve as a corresponding model. Further corroborated by an historical Islamic Sufism prevalent in the capital that is highly experiential, personal and mystical, the spread of Pentecostal influence was most keenly felt throughout Hajj Yusuf churches in two areas.³¹⁶ The first was emphasising personal internal spirituality enhanced through communal sharing and available as a source for needed hope and strength. The second was an increase in the need for churches to offer practical communal guidance in producing beneficial interaction with the dominant cultural narrative.

³¹⁴ Gordon Awetch, pastor trainee of Shilluk PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 20 March 2006, Khartoum.

³¹⁵ Fermo Ogilla, interview with author, 18 March 2006.

³¹⁶ There is a long history of Sufism in Khartoum. Commonly referenced as the ‘whirling dervishes,’ the most popular contemporary form is of the Qadiriya order *tariqa*, celebrated every Friday evening at the tomb of Sheikah Hamed al-Nil in Omdurman.

Both of these elements were clearly discernable at the Pentecostal Victory Bible Fellowship in Hajj Yusuf. Responding to what he perceived as most important in a worship service pastor Hani Kamish noted:

You know there are two things which we perceive to be the most important. The word is first. And the second thing is that as people listen to the word and then accept it for their individual needs. So the word must meet their needs and this means that they must experience the word in a real life.³¹⁷

Several members of the congregation picked up on this theme responding to why they believed the congregation had experienced recent growth:

Ipiol: I think because of the difficulties that people have faced here.

Joyce: There are many reasons... [Some] came when they were sick and then when they were in the church they got healed and they remained in the church. Others maybe God spoke to them direct calling them. Others maybe they heard the word of God.³¹⁸

In the midst of difficulties southerners found in the church strength, healing and solutions to the problems that surrounded them. Broadly representative, the above highlights that the emphasis of the SPC was on providing the space to help southerners navigate spiritual and social challenges in a format intersecting sound advice and spiritual sacredness. Among the displaced of Hajj Yusuf this Pentecostal focus on being a 'practical' church came to permeate many of the denominations.

That the church is concerned with developing internal spirituality and is seen by the community as a safe haven for depositing difficult struggles is demonstrated at a church worship level by the increased practice of sharing personal testimonies.

The following testimonies given by three different women during one worship service are representative:

Lillie: She wants to share something that happened to her... Her husband was on a mission and some people came to her house and prayed against the devil there. She was cooking some food but as they were chatting and praying as the guests were leaving the gas canister in the kitchen exploded. In the kitchen was a lot of smoke and a big flame. And the house was made of local materials but in her heart she knew it was not the gas canister. So she went through the flame and saw that it was just the saucepan and not the cylinder so she grabbed the saucepan and threw it out. And all the other people were just watching. God gave her this courage and kept the two cylinders in her house from exploding. So take God at his word and trust him.

Joyce: She is glad to be here. She didn't know there was a church here but some people told her so she came. She had cancer and was very sick and when she was diagnosed the devil filled her heart with fear. As she was going to surgery she remembered the lady with blood who touched the hem of Jesus. And then her fear went away and she went into surgery and it

³¹⁷ Hani Kamish, pastor of SPC Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 20 March 2006, Khartoum.

³¹⁸ Ipiol Luduriko and Joyce Guwo, members of the SPC Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

has now been gone for 16 years. But then her doctor found another blockage but the doctor did not want to do anything. She took all the papers of her diagnosis and put her hands on them and prayed for God's healing and then she burned the papers and was healed. She was attending an ECS but will come here from now on. So when you are sick, pray to God. He is free to do whatever he likes.

Her husband had a donkey that was producing some work for them. But the donkey was old and she wanted to get another one. She wanted to buy also a new cart. And she prayed. And a man gave her the cart and said she could pay him back a little out of her earnings each time.³¹⁹

Though testimonies range over a variety of subjects they often centre on three issues especially relevant to the Khartoum experience: developing strength and confidence to deal with a difficult setting, physical healing and miraculous financial provision. Though sharing testimonies is a particularly strong characteristic of the



Figure 17 – Prayer for Healing in an ECS

SPC, it was in a similar vein observed in other Hajj Yusuf congregations.³²⁰ For those offering the testimonies, 'it builds confidence in them[selves],' while listeners are exhorted to maintain hope and communal solidarity by learning to 'share our experiences together.'³²¹ Furthermore, 'producing a testimony not only helps to relieve symptoms; it also helps survivors to integrate the trauma story into their personal histories by allowing them to understand its significance in the context of political and social events.'³²² Building confidence, extending hope, strengthening community and helping individuals connect difficult personal experiences to a broader framework are all critical in communal stabilisation. Modelled first by the Pentecostal churches and spread by interacting youth to the other denominations, the emphasis of church worship and practice in Hajj Yusuf shifted towards a focus on internal spirituality that connected individual's common problems with divine power, guidance and advice.

³¹⁹ Lillie, Joyce and an unnamed third individual, participants of SPC Hajj Yusuf, simultaneously translated by Justo Wani, recorded by author, 19 March 2006, Khartoum.

³²⁰ For example, in the ECS Hajj Yusuf congregation on 26 March 2006. The worship style and active congregational-wide simultaneous prayer times also reflected a Pentecostal influence. These practices were not observed in the ECS outside of Khartoum.

³²¹ Hani Kamish, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

³²² Stuart Turner, "Torture, Refuge, and Trust," in *Mistrusting Refugees*, eds. E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 68.

A second ascertainable way in which churches increased southern stability was a collective extension by the churches of culturally relevant divine access and sanctity to the displaced during births and marriages. Gordon Awetch for example remarked:

Originally before the people become Christian if somebody doesn't care about the church they do their own traditional thing. If somebody's wife is giving birth to a child they don't care about the church. But recently the church is more important [so] that when somebody falls away they will call for the church to come and carry them... When somebody has an occasion, a thanksgiving, they will call for the church. Anything which is little or small they will call for the church.³²³

To a certain extent displaced southerners in Khartoum do not strictly adhere to traditional religious practices.³²⁴ This has left a spiritual void keenly felt during times of important life moments. Furthermore, the overriding Arabic culture in Khartoum has challenged and shifted traditional taboos. Isaac Cham Jwok explained:

We the Shilluk we have traditional which respects big people and traditional system of the Shilluk. But now we become involved in Arabic system and it is [impossible], it is [impossible] for the Shilluk to let the boy marry their relative. But because what the Arabic practice here some Shilluk become involved which is ideas that we got here in Khartoum... It is not feared like what the Shilluk was before. It is a shame.³²⁵

Traditional marriage practices are complex and a fundamental component to community stability throughout south Sudan.³²⁶ The decrease in the efficacious power of traditional practitioners of religion in Khartoum in combination with the weakened set of governing relationship laws has further disrupted marriage and family values. In this context pastoral leadership offers an opportunity for counselling and more importantly, through performative prayers and religious

³²³ Gordon Awetch, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

³²⁴ Mostly associated with individuals who migrated north to Khartoum around the turn of the twentieth century, far earlier than most displaced southerners, the decrease in participation in the spirit possession cult *tumbura* highlights that in Khartoum there has been a general decline in strict adherence to customs associated with traditional religious practice. G.P. Makris points out that in the 1960s there were eighty-two *tumbura* groups, by 1990 there was five and in 1996 only two remained. G.P. Makris, *Changing Master: Spirit Possession and Identity Construction among Slave Descendants and Other Subordinates in the Sudan* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 2000), 10.

³²⁵ Isaac Cham Jwok, pastor of PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 20 March 2006, Khartoum.

³²⁶ Marriages and births are intimately tied to the creation of proper societal relationships that govern everyday interactions and relations. For a representative overview of the issues related to the traditional establishment of families see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and Family among the Nuer* (Livingstone: Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1945); E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951) and its corresponding critique, Kathleen Gough, "Nuer Kinship: A Re-examination," in *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E. E. Evans-Pritchard*, ed. T. O. Beidelman (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971), 79-121; as well as E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Man and Woman among the Azande* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

ceremonies restores a sense of divine sanctity otherwise missing during these endeavours. As Lillian Paul and Boulis Francis noted, ‘when the baby is born previously people organised the ceremony or things not connected with church but now they invite church to come and pray for the small baby that is born in the family... many things have changed.’³²⁷

In a community riddled with insecurity, shifting standards and cultural degradation, reinstating a sense of sacredness establishes worth, respect and boundaries of permissibility integral in solidifying communal relationships. Importantly, church leadership and values are not necessarily determining the scope of new marriage patterns and standards. The influence is more fundamental: it is a performative rite in which the southern community at large can turn inward and self-regulate in a way that establishes a spiritual sense of stability and a normalcy to societal relationships.

Mirroring the above, for the churches in Hajj Yusuf sickness and death is a third way in which the broader community turned to Christian spirituality for sanctification, access, advice and aid. Health problems and concerns were frequently cited as a significant problem facing the displaced community and there is among displaced southerners a palpable fear of actually pursuing substantive care at local hospitals. Recorded by Elizabeth Coker one Sudanese refugee in Egypt bemoaned:

There are women whose wombs have been stopped so they will never give birth. We are blind, we are not doctors. They [doctors] remove the womb so that our women will never give birth. These are all the things that we are facing here as refugees. The oppression we get here is the same oppression we got back in Khartoum.³²⁸

Though these fears are often hyperbolic and unsubstantiated they are regularly passed as word of mouth truth persisting because of the real pejorative racism southerners regularly encounter. Mary David remarked that even in hospitals there is a problem of segregation whereby southerners and northern Arabs are treated differently and unequally.³²⁹ Furthermore, although there are two health centres in Hajj Yusuf, one administered by the SCC and one associated with the Islamic *Dawa*

³²⁷ Lillian Paul and Boulis Francis, members of ECS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

³²⁸ Elizabeth Coker, “Dislocated Identity and the Fragmented Body,” 415.

³²⁹ Mary David, member of PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

party,³³⁰ more serious health concerns necessitate travel which for displaced southerners is often prohibitive.³³¹ For southerners displaced to Hajj Yusuf, the cumulative result is an acute sense of disempowerment and inability to beneficially interact with the dominant culture.

In southern Sudan religious practitioners have historically been appreciated for their medicinal capabilities and are often qualitatively judged accordingly. In Hajj Yusuf the community at large is increasingly turning inward to the church perceiving that it functions in this capacity. Joyce Guwo emphasised that the local community has never ‘interrupted’ their services:

Instead if they have problem they call us to pray for [them]. And even they telephone us: I am sick, I am having problem with husband and in your prayers include me. And later on we invite them to come in, join our group... Like this sister of mine she is diabetic and she has been sick and when they prayed here she became well. And when people heard of this they also wanted to come in.³³²

Lillian Paul expressed a similar sentiment:

[The] church used to give support to the community, for example, when somebody is sick we call for our pastor Yohannes to come and he has to take that patient to the hospital by his car... not demanding anything. And sometimes if somebody is sick he cannot provide the medicine for himself he will bring the receipt or the prescription paper to the church and the church will buy it.³³³

The above quotes highlight several distinct but interrelated threads. First, the church understands and is indeed perceived to extend services that incorporate the broader community regardless of religious affiliation. Second and as already indicated in Joyce’s SPC testimony, through sometimes vigorous prayer sessions the church promotes the possibility of physical healing through divine intervention.³³⁴ This coincides with a traditional view that connects physical maladies with spiritual remedies. With a decline in traditional practitioners and a demoralising severance from ‘modern’ health care options the potentiality of healing provides an outlet for

³³⁰ Sharaf Bannaga, *Peace and the Displaced in Sudan*, 127. Dawa has ties to the Iraqi militant Muqtada al-Sadr as well as the Iranian Ayatollah.

³³¹ ‘Despite popular belief, there is no evidence that the displaced increase hospital burdens: most hospital facilities are located far from the settlements, thus making transportation unaffordable. In addition, the language barrier, particularly for the southern displaced population, limits access to health services.’ Eltigani E. Eltigani, “Health Implications of Displacement in Sudan,” in *War and Drought in Sudan: Essays on Population Displacement*, ed. Eltigani E. Eltigani (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 56-7.

³³² Joyce Guwo, interview with author, 24 March 2006.

³³³ Lillian Paul, interview with author, 24 March 2006.

³³⁴ See page 100-1 for this testimony.

expressing pent frustration and grief while restoring a semblance of choice, control and connection to an overarching purpose and paradigm. Third, the church is a source for practical help in facilitating interaction with the health care infrastructure. In this way the church not only beneficially influences the southern displaced community it repositions itself from cultural periphery to communal centrality in terms of providing guidance in interaction with the dominant Riverine society and in affirming spiritual sacredness and connectivity.

Though to a lesser extent, death and burial ceremonies also afford an opportunity for the church to impact the Hajj Yusuf displaced community. One pastor observed that church members regularly utilised gatherings as a ‘very good time to give a message to the people... to preach the good news.’³³⁵ Hani Kamish elaborated further that ‘in funeral places people talk with their relatives. After all the people have prayed they bring this issue of peace... they enlighten people about the issues... They enlighten people about the issue of peace.’³³⁶ This continues a traditional practice that understood burial ceremonies as a critical component in maintaining spiritual and societal peace through the airing of grievances and the restoration of relationships. In addition to transmitting these values the church has expanded the focus to incorporate updates and implications regarding the broader inter-societal peace process. The outcome is the perseverance of a traditional approach to interpersonal and communal reconciliation that increases communal stability and accentuates the capacity of the church to help usher the community through times of grief and transition.

A fourth and final way that the church increases communal stability among displaced southerners in Hajj Yusuf through a bestowal of cultural and practical sacredness, relates to the tentative proffering of solutions to three of the most critical problems facing the community. This is first seen in an effort by the churches to help southerners connect with educational opportunities. As one of the local members of the council of chiefs noted, ‘the most important thing is the education, the education of the displaced children here. The education should be increased.’³³⁷ In Sudan, there is a long history of Christian provision of education that to a large

³³⁵ Isaac Cham Jwok, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

³³⁶ Hani Kamish, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

³³⁷ Sandrew Yusef, member of a council of Equatorian chiefs in Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

extent has been maintained in Khartoum. Importantly these efforts were attractive less because of their association with churches and more to their basic provision of education.³³⁸ That is the churches are not so much shaping educational interest or discourse as they are responding to the practical needs of the community. Within Khartoum itself there are several sizable schools associated with churches such as Unity High School which in 2001 had five hundred students enrolled.³³⁹ Though much smaller Hajj Yusuf is home to multiple schools initiated and administered by various churches. For example, the ECS hosts both a preschool and an adult literacy class through the indigenous NGO Salvation Mission Sudan. The PCOS Shilluk congregation regularly provides small scholarships to help with student tuition fees. The Mission, Evangelism and Education Department of PCOS-Malakal oversees three schools in Hajj Yusuf, and the Catholic Church runs perhaps the largest school for displaced southerners in Hajj Yusuf.³⁴⁰ These institutions and efforts provide an invaluable service to the community opening opportunities to displaced southerners that are otherwise denied to them by the overarching framework of governmental neglect.³⁴¹ Significantly the provision of this service does not appear to dramatically increase local attendance as the community has come to expect that the churches will attempt to function in this fashion. With a positive benefit on communal stabilisation, these institutions further illustrate that the displaced in Hajj Yusuf regularly turn for guidance and support to the churches that have themselves shifted from cultural periphery to centrality.

Hidden in broad daylight on the dusty streets of Hajj Yusuf is one of the most tragic underreported consequences of the decades-long war: the *shamassa*. The *shamassa* are ‘the children of the sun,’ a ‘vagrant army’ of more than twenty

³³⁸ Andrew C. Wheeler, “‘Can You Announce the Darkness After You Have Seen the Light?’ Catholic Catechists’ Achievement in Upper Nile 1970-1996: Reflecting the Life and Works of Zachary Bol Chatim, James Duol Kai, George Gatguec, Jerome Yac and Joseph Pal Mut,” in *Announcing the Light: Sudanese Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 166.

³³⁹ *Unity High School, 1902-2002* (Beirut: Karaky Printing Press, 2002), 101.

³⁴⁰ Stephen, Deputy Director of Mission, Evangelism and Education Department of PCOS-Malakal, interview with author, 18 March 2006, Khartoum.

³⁴¹ For example in the 1989-1990 academic year out of the six major universities and colleges there were 5,574 students enrolled: 5,524 were northern students, 50 were southern. B. Yongo-Bure, “The Underdevelopment of the Southern Sudan Since Independence,” in *Civil War in the Sudan*, eds. M. W. Daly and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 61.

thousand children roaming the streets between the ages of six and sixteen.³⁴² Forced to the streets to work, abandoned or simply the sole surviving member of a family seeking safety from wrenching war the number of the *shamassa* is growing at an alarming rate. In July 2007 the United Nations Children's Fund reported that 'an estimated one hundred new born babies were being abandoned on the streets of the capital Khartoum every month. Half of these were dying on the streets.'³⁴³ One study found that between 1998 and 2003 out of the 2,500 abandoned babies who survived and were admitted to the Maygoma institution for illegitimate babies, '2,100 died – a mortality rate of 84 per cent.'³⁴⁴ The children that subsist on the streets face a number of difficulties and a dismal future. Hunger, homelessness, drug and glue addiction, 'Pepsi glass' fighting, street battles with the police and rival gangs, prostitution, sickness and death are prevalent. As one observer noted, many in Hajj Yusuf see these children simply as 'rubbish.'³⁴⁵

In this context churches have attempted to practically respond in what is a second example of provided church guidance within an unaltered setting. Although the ECS does oversee sixty such children distributed in various church members' homes,³⁴⁶ the most important effort in relation to the *shamassa* street children in Hajj Yusuf is the Boys Hope Centre administered by the Sudan Interior Church.³⁴⁷ Founded in 1994 Boys Hope is home to forty street boys ranging from age six to eighteen. With seventeen teachers across the denominational spectrum the Centre offers the first four educational classes, provides funds for further education and teaches practical skills such as welding. Several times a week the Centre also offers drop-in activities attended by anywhere from fifty to seventy additional street boys. Eighty percent of the budget is provided by three international partners with the

³⁴² Michael Parkers, *Children of the Sun: Stories of the Christian Journey in Sudan* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000), 46.

³⁴³ United Nations Children's Fund, "Alternative Family-Based Care for Abandoned and Orphaned Children Launched in North of Sudan," 2 July 2007, available from www.unicef.org/media/media_40173.html; Internet; accessed on 2 September 2007.

³⁴⁴ "Saving Khartoum's Abandoned Babies," *The Star*, 15 April 2007, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 16 April 2007.

³⁴⁵ Noah Manzult, Assistant Director of Boys Hope Centre, Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 7 March 2007, Khartoum.

³⁴⁶ Paul Elianai, manager of the ECS orphanage Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

³⁴⁷ The following is based on Noah Manzult and Francis Tombe, Director of Boys Hope Centre, Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 7 March 2007, Khartoum.

remaining twenty percent raised by the Centre itself from local individuals and churches. Although some of the boys that have been taken in have left and reverted to their previous life, a number have graduated and successfully integrated into the broader community. While this effort is numerically modest, it is the largest and most important endeavour of its kind in all of Hajj Yusuf. Although more could be done to encourage family cohesiveness and child rights, an awareness of this growing need coupled with several initiatives further illustrates an attempt by local churches to provide practical assistance.³⁴⁸

A third and final prominent manner in which the churches in Hajj Yusuf increase communal stability through an interjection of practical advice is in relation to the area of employment. As already noted southerners face stiff competition and a number of difficulties in procuring reliable employment often excluding them to the economic margins. Churches often serve as a basis for encouragement and networking as well as a source of practical advice. Responding to a question concerning the role of the church in the community, the following comment by a Hajj Yusuf pastor is illustrative:

You know the role is to educate the community on how they can help themselves... We actually have a number of people who are suffering. They could not get the job. We educate them, we teach them. We say it is not a shame to pick up, to work as a housemaid. Still if you are not doing something evil you are [at least] earning a wage by your job. So you may be somebody who washes the cars and get the income... We educate them so that they have confidence in themselves. Whatever they can do at their reach, let them do it since it is not conflicting with the word of God. So know we have few of them who got a job, you see.... And they also begin to continue to educate others how they work through life, how they go through difficulties.³⁴⁹

Churches function within a continuous cycle of encouraged motivation and empowered hope as members counsel one another on the path to employment. Although labour opportunities exist within this sphere, they frequently entail a level of genuine risk. One individual commented, 'the woman has to go and work in this Arab's house to get food for the family. It is not easy. Sometimes even a woman is accused of stealing things, which is not true. It is just because she is a southerner.

³⁴⁸ Although efforts such as the Boys Hope Centre are important and necessary churches could do more through sermons and seminars to promote the rights of children not to be pressed into working or be forced out of the home at a premature age. As Noah Manzult described, 'some of them have a family [in Khartoum], some of them not. Some of them their family refused them. "Don't stay in the house, go to the market and bring money home." So they used to go to the street and find the life on the street better than the life at home because there is no food, nothing, so they live on the street.' Noah Manzult, interview with author, 7 March 2007.

³⁴⁹ Hani Kamish, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

Because she is a southerner she will be arrested and beaten properly and even taken to the [police] station.’³⁵⁰ More significantly, these jobs often carry a demeaning personal and social stigma doubly reinforced by racially prejudiced employers and many southerners will refuse to work or turn to dangerous illegal activities before engaging in these types of occupation.³⁵¹ As these types of vocation are commonly the only accessible opportunities for southerners, church teaching that acknowledges the risk while working to remove a stigma of shame is enormously beneficial. In an environment where the international community provides little to zero regular aid and where the government actively ignores and disrupts, procuring a regular small income reduces the risk of frustrated fighting, lost education, abandoned children and an array of diseases. Churches therefore act as agents of empowerment providing practical suggestions, networking and transforming mental and emotional perspectives towards an encompassing environment.

Located firmly within a Muslim dominated milieu that the church is unable to alter, Christian spirituality and emphasis has shifted to providing practical solutions and guidance to beneficial engagement with the broader culture. Demonstrated at an ecumenical level in the spread of Pentecostal teaching and practice the religious focus has distilled an internal holiness that connects spiritual well being with physical livelihood. By continuing and extending what amounts to a traditional understanding of religious objectives, the southern displaced community in Hajj Yusuf has increasingly turned inward to self-regulated churches as cultural custodians that extend divine sanctity at key life transitions. This bestowal of cosmological significance is reinforced by efforts to assist in alleviating the educational, vocational and childhood displacement problems facing the southern community. While these endeavours have increased communal stability, it was the religio-nationalistic Islamic politics of ‘purity’ driven by the interpersonal rivalries of Bashir, Turabi, Taha and Nafi as well as the Riverine Arabic racial prejudices that

³⁵⁰ Stanley Khamis, church secretary of ECS Hajj Yusuf and Director of Salvation Mission Sudan, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

³⁵¹ The social identity theory understands that ‘members of low status social groups do not suffer from enduring and pervasive low self-esteem, but rather that particular contexts... may engage such feelings.’ Steve Hinkel and Rupert Brown, “Intergroup Comparisons and Social Identity: Some Links and Lacunae,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 57. In the Khartoum context of continuous racism southern Sudanese would have such disempowering emotions frequently triggered, increasing substantively the need for the counterbalancing force of hope and esteem offered by the churches.

lead to a second overarching impact of the churches on the southern displaced community.

Centralisation of Politicised Resistance

Father Jacobs, a Catholic parish priest tells the following story about a church destroyed via 'town planning' by the government following Easter 1997:

During lunchtime I got news that the bulldozer was coming to break the church... I rushed there, I saw people not all of them were Christians... Some of them they were small children with stones waiting for these people to come. The youth, some of them were not Christians but there they were, there they were actually saying, we are Christians. When we talk about Christianity by way of receiving baptism and things like that that is not what they mean when they say, but we are Christians. I think what they are also trying to say is that we are not Muslim... We are Christians and we will defend the Christians places. I think that is what they understand... Then nobody [from the government] came.³⁵²

Pastor Isaac Cham Jwok relayed a similar experience concerning the destruction of the PCOS-Shilluk church building in 1998:

Sometime ago the church of Hajj Yusuf can be destroyed by the government and these people, [the church members], can quarrel and then after that get quiet without knowing their rights. This is the church built by the people. And then after the survey was done they did not give us anything. And now I will show you this place, but they did not give us anything... This is a violation of human rights, which we want to fight for it, because you cannot build a house and be destroyed simply like that without giving you [something]... The church is facing a lot of problems here. But we know God gives us the courage to continue on. We will be able to continue in this cycle... Sometimes the government can come and destroy it but we will never give up.³⁵³

The above two stories highlight a common thread woven into the fabric of southern Sudanese internally displaced to the dusty streets of Hajj Yusuf: the increasing centralisation of politicised resistance in the locus of the church. The Government of Sudan attempted to promulgate a united Islamic front that was inevitably victorious politically, militarily, socially and culturally. Increasingly southerners found in the church the space to unite and voice defiance that was as much political as it was religious. This politicisation of the church as a resistant force against militant Islam is most clearly seen among displaced churches in Khartoum. As one observer noted, 'the politicization of Islam by the government in Khartoum made religion a political issue in the Sudan. Consequently, many

³⁵² Father Jacobs, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

³⁵³ Isaac Cham Jwok, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

Southerners have come to see churches as their political allies in struggle against injustice and oppression.³⁵⁴ For displaced southerners in Hajj Yusuf the result is a partnered sense of stabilising solidarity.

Churches throughout Khartoum displayed numerous efforts of individual and united resistance. For example in the March 1995 Khartoum State elections, six Catholic Bishops 'issued a daring pastoral letter that called on parishioners to boycott the polls since the elections were imposed on the people, parties were banned, and all candidates had to support a predefined Islamist orientation.'³⁵⁵ The SCC maintained an active Advocacy and Communication Programme that for example, in 1996 prepared an official position paper on peace for the SCC, developed information on AIDS, circulated 3,000 copies of a women's newsletter titled 'Arise' and produced a number of radio programmes aired both in Khartoum and Juba.³⁵⁶ Following the second Meeting of the House of Bishops in Nairobi in February 1999 the ECS established a Justice and Peace Department with an office in both Khartoum and in Juba that eventually came under the guidance of Bishop Daniel Deng.³⁵⁷ Within Hajj Yusuf the ECS church hosts Salvation Mission Sudan, a small indigenous NGO under the directorship of Stanley Khamis. Hosting its first workshop in 2005, this NGO has two primary areas of concern: generating awareness for returning southern IDPs about landmines and conducting workshops on conflict resolution, peace building and good governance.³⁵⁸ Though each of these endeavours were important, politically their influence was nominal. The real influence was more diffused among displaced southerners that continued a shift in turning towards the churches as a collective source of resistance and unity.

³⁵⁴ Amir H. Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 67.

³⁵⁵ Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Sudan – Contested National Identities*, 123-4. The issuance of this letter recalls the famous Malawian Lenten pastoral letter, 'Living Our Faith,' issued in 1992 and critical in the democratisation process of Malawi. See Kenneth R. Ross, "Church Life, Civil Society and Democratization in Malawi 1992-96," in *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, eds. James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 131-56.

³⁵⁶ Sudan Council of Churches, *Sudan Council of Churches 1996 Mid-Year Report*, VIII.

³⁵⁷ Festus Ufulle Ga-Aro, "Building Bridges, The ECS Contribution to Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution," in *"But God is Not Defeated!" Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 173.

³⁵⁸ The above information about SMS is based on Stanley Khamis, church secretary of ECS Hajj Yusuf and Director of Salvation Mission Sudan, interview with author, 26 March 2006, Khartoum.

In the early 1990s as Hajj Yusuf was transitioning from the unregulated squatter settlement of 'Carton' Kassala to Hai El Baraka the southern community was further destabilised by interethnic clashes. One observer articulated that fighting occurred among 'the Nilotic groups – Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, these groups. In fact in Hai Baraka I witnessed people spearing themselves.'³⁵⁹ When these incidents occurred:

The church is the first to move. They will go and talk to these [community] elders so they can negotiate something because, you know, they sometimes feel powerless, they cannot do anything they cannot have a full control. Because, you see, you live in an area where there are mixed tribes. You do not have this control. But you need it, and actually somebody to help you. So when the church comes to advise, you can do like that, you can meet here, and then you can talk these things and so on then they begin to help. We used to talk; we used to reconcile people, then facing the elders, talk together.³⁶⁰

A Shilluk confirmed this development communicating, 'before becoming a Christian you will find that tribe and tribe cannot sit together but now people are used to sitting together and praying together, marrying each other, because they became aware when they got the Good News.'³⁶¹

Importantly, by the middle of the 90s southern inter-tribal conflicts seem to have mostly dissipated and were never mentioned as a central concern in any of the focus groups hosted in Hajj Yusuf. That these conflicts decreased is probably a reflection of a growing awareness concerning the importance of southern solidarity against a more powerful external northern threat most regularly confronted through hostile police beatings and harassment, altercations over public brewing of beer and the destruction of church property. This shift was further substantiated, rather than directed as in Kakuma, by an underpinning Christian religiosity. The influence of the churches was in the arena of political interaction. Church leaders helped empower community elders with the tools to cross over traditional tribal boundaries that were hampering their reconciliation efforts and in this churches played an important and necessary role in extending communal stability and peace building. In addition, politically the churches exerted a second important influence: overt sign of resistance. As a motivational symbol, the church was paramount.

³⁵⁹ Hani Kamish, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Isaac Cham Jwok, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

Churches therefore exerted a critical political function in Hajj Yusuf in establishing practical channels of guidance and interaction with existing elders and communal venues of power rather than intentionally developing among constituents a broad southern consciousness crossing tribal boundaries. Rather than shaping the primary discourse, churches helped ease confrontations while functioning as a buffer agent that sought to protect and operate as a voice for southerners. As the church continued to develop as a symbol of resistance the broader community increasingly turned inward to the church as the central mode of communicated desire for reform. This is illustrated in part by the convergence of southerners around Christian self-identification proclamations during times of targeted church destruction as indicated in the story relayed by Father Jacobs at the beginning of this section.

That the church functioned as a central component facilitating beneficial inter-communal north-south interaction is seen in that the primary emphasis of church teaching on relationships concerns proper interaction with Muslim neighbours rather than south-south associations. For example, one SPC member noted that her approach to ‘my neighbours... [is] to be kind to them and to interact with them according to my gospel.’³⁶² One ECS participant emphasised that ‘the Bible says you should love your neighbour, you should love your enemy, you should love each other.’³⁶³ Another individual stated that the importance of Sunday is that ‘after seven days people come together and they give thanks to God for his protection, his blessing.’³⁶⁴ The overarching picture is one of trying to establish a normal interaction perhaps best described as quiet. At times this comes across as an almost forlorn acceptance. For example one PCOS member in comparing the ability of the church to effectively evangelise against Muslim counterparts lamented, ‘when the Muslims go and preach to the people they give food... And they give clothes. But we as Christians we feel without food, we don’t carry anything. This is the thing, do they believe us or do they believe those who have some food?’³⁶⁵

Perhaps as a result, at the grassroots level in Hajj Yusuf the majority of the everyday interactions between northerners and southerners is generally mild.

³⁶² Ipiol Luduriko, interview with author, 24 March 2006.

³⁶³ Viviana Aluda, interview with author, 24 March 2006.

³⁶⁴ Lucia Brown, member of ECS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

³⁶⁵ Nyanath Michael, member of PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

Although there have been flare-ups, there have also been occasions of genuine support. This was clearly demonstrated at the SPC Victory Bible Fellowship during the 2005 Christmas season. The church was approached by a Muslim living across the street stating, 'I want to be part of your Christmas celebrations. You don't have electricity but I will allow you to extend this [extension cord] from my house.'³⁶⁶ Although the individual did not himself participate in the Christmas service, he did allow the church to use his electricity for their special celebration without charge.

Interaction with the local political community elders and leaders is more ambivalent. Hajj Yusuf has been divided into numerous small sections demarcated as 'Popular Organisations,' each with their own community chairman. In addition, the displaced are also accountable to traditional tribal chiefs. The leaders of the various Popular Organisations report directly to the northern government and as such often have a tenuous relationship with local church leaders. This was clearly demonstrated in an incident involving the SPC focus group. Prior to the initiation of the focus group an individual was approached and asked about helping with arrangements to meet with the local leader of the Popular Organisation. After expressing some initial concern the individual agreed. However, at the conclusion of the focus group the individual took a circuitous path that led far away from the church to a central headquarters that the individual, after arrival, admitted knew would be closed because it was Friday. In the end the individual proceeded a substantial distance from the chapel before declining to help in this regard out of an expressed nervousness of planted government spies.

The relationship with traditional chiefs is also often strained. Responding to his dealing with the local southern leader one pastor described:

Sometimes they do not function in what is the need of the community... They say in the *sharia* people are not allowed to drink. So when they find alcohol or wine there they used to beat people... Sometimes there is a relation [between us], but it is very weak because they are defining themselves as the people who are the two heads as the southern people and at the same time as part of the government to implement their policy... They understand the needs, even they are connected but they are more interested for the government.³⁶⁷

Traditional chiefs are however likely to recognise the importance and influence of the church. One emphasised:

³⁶⁶ Hani Kamish, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

³⁶⁷ Isaac Cham Jwok, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

Many people are coming to church. [It] acts as an umbrella. It gives support in many areas: the area of education, previously they distribute relief to people, and they also give medicines sometimes when they get it from other friends outside they also give it to the community. This is why people are coming. They see that the church is good and that the church will help.³⁶⁸

All the same, at a political level, even at the grassroots the relationship between the church and local representatives is often tense as the church functions as a small bulwark that the government would assume eliminated.

At an elite governmental level with the state or national government inter-religious relationships have occurred only on the grounds determined by the ruling regime. Although there have been several Christians included in the national Cabinet, the relationship has more frequently been characterised as that which occurred during the April 1993 Conference of Religions in the Sudan. The conference was sponsored by the Peace and Development Foundation and included eighty-five international participants in addition to numerous Sudanese. President Bashir himself addressed the convention stating, ‘we have made religious values guide the individual’s as well as the state activities in our country. This is aimed at creating a basis of good citizenship and humane community in order to lead a modern nation. We are doing this... to change the society, promote economic prosperity, achieve justice and attain political stability.’³⁶⁹ At the same time at the last minute the conference organisers withdrew an invitation to the General Secretary of the SCC to present a paper arguing that ‘the paper was too critical of the Government’s policies... A compromise was made and [the] Deputy presented the paper. He was ordered to limit his speech to three minutes. Originally, the paper was to be presented in 30 minutes.’³⁷⁰ The national government has often attempted to project to the international community a unified celebration of Islamic values that is respectful of other religious traditions while internally suppressing voices of Christian dissent. The churches in Hajj Yusuf or in greater Khartoum more generally, have been unable to alter this framework.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ Jambo Laeija, Mundri Chief of Baraka Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

³⁶⁹ Hafiz Al-Nager, ed., *Conference of Religions in the Sudan* (Khartoum: Hael House, 1993), 47.

³⁷⁰ Ezekiel Kutjok, “Christian-Muslim Inter-Religious Dialogue,” 76.

³⁷¹ Importantly, within Khartoum there have been other attempts, Christian and otherwise, that promoted dialogue and inter-religious exchange. For one such example focused on Christian-Muslim women in dialogue see Lillian Craig Harris, “A Model for Healing and Reconciliation in Sudan,” in

The churches in Hajj Yusuf saw intense persecution that further destabilised the community and disrupted efforts to generate a more peaceful holistic coexistence at the grassroots level. As Stanley Khamis and Boulis Francis expressed, ‘previously the relationship of the church with the past government is poor because the government does not like the church to exist as a church in northern Sudan here... The government just fights the church by all means.’³⁷² This targeted approach resulted in a crystallisation of the church as the most potent symbol for resistance in the displaced camps. At the same time ‘there was a big church evangelism during the war... In the displaced camps, which is very hard for southerners, even those who had Muslim background became Christians because of what they saw happened to them and their relatives during that time.’³⁷³ That is the broader southern community de-emphasised their own religious affiliation in order to stand in a protest of united solidarity. The church became a politicised space that further shifted it from the edges to the centre of the displaced culture benefiting further from the strengthening of a vague civil spirituality expressed in Christian attendance and vernacular. The Hajj Yusuf community itself also positively gained from this expansion as churches emphasised positive interaction with individual Muslims even while advocating for southern rights generated tension and difficulty with local and national power bases. Thus, while the overarching framework was maintained, the broader southern displaced community turned inwards to the church for help in engineering beneficial channels of interaction with the dominant paradigm. In addition, displaced southerners also utilised the church as a form of resistance to that established structure with an overall result of increased communal stability for the southern community.

Analysis and Conclusion

Displaced southerners in Hajj Yusuf endure numerous trials and difficulties on a daily basis. Excluded from the mainstream economy and blocked from regular

Seeking an Open Society: Inter-Faith Relations and Dialogue in Sudan Today, ed. Stuart E. Brown (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 89-98.

³⁷² Stanley Khamis and Boulis Francis, interview with author, 24 March 2006.

³⁷³ Fermo Ogilla, interview with author, 18 March 2006.

international aid southerners subsist through meagre opportunities on the desert edges of greater Khartoum. In an environment shaped by elite interpersonal rivalries, multiple non-accountable competing internal security agencies and a government aiming to erect a structure of purity, southerners have found Islamic-based agendas imposed on them at every level including at the very personal and individual. For example, one woman remarked, ‘most of the people they fear; to be a Christian they also fear. People like to pretend to be Arabs not Christian because of persecution... During those times even we were forced to wear a long [*hijab*] to cover ourselves up.’³⁷⁴ Southerners were abducted off the streets, disappeared in ‘ghost houses,’ regularly harassed by police officials, denied educational and health care facilities, expelled without warning through the wanton destruction of their homes and constantly racially profiled by a prejudicial Riverine Arabic society. In this context the churches in Hajj Yusuf beneficially impacted the displaced community in two ways.

First, churches bestowed cultural sanctity and practical sacredness to the southern community. This is evidenced in an internal spirituality that modelled by the Sudan Pentecostal Church came to influence all of the denominations through an emphasis on linking spiritual connectivity to physical livelihood. The result is a greater sense of empowerment and ability to translate suffering and difficulty into a broader paradigm of meaning. As Lucia Dak explained, connecting with the love of God ‘helps us overcome our suffering that we face as displaced in Khartoum. When we turn to Jesus it is like coming from under a pressure.’³⁷⁵ As a methodology and worship focus this emphasis was particularly demonstrated in the sharing of personal testimonies during worship services.

With important communal stabilising reverberations, the ability of the church to deeply resonate with the displaced community is perceived in the increasing turning of the community to the church looking for divine blessing and sacredness

³⁷⁴ Joyce Guwo, interview with author, 24 March 2006. Though less common during the most recent civil war, external adherence reflects a process of safe negotiation with long historical roots, ‘during the Mahdiyyah all the non-Moslems (Copts, Greeks, foreigners and Jews) adopted the same strategy: external adhesion to the Mahdi’s Islam and, at least for the Copts and the Jews, secret practice of their own faith.’ Camillo Ballin, “The Dimmis in the Sudanese Mahdiyyah (1881-1898),” *Islamochristiana* 27 (2001): 120.

³⁷⁵ Lucia Dak, member of PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

during key life transitions. Responding to the influence of the church on the community, pastor Yohannes Benjamin articulated:

Actually the impact on the community is very great. All the community now they know the church it is super in their life. Every activities that take place in the community they used to come to the church. When there is a newborn, newborn baby born they send for church to come and pray. And when there is funeral rites. When there is death. When there is the marriage they used to come to the church. Where there is somebody sick, he needs prayers, they send for church. And even if there is discrimination in the family they also call for the church because some families, some families broke down and the church has to prepare and reconcile them.³⁷⁶

During births, marriages, sickness and death, southerners increasingly turned inward to a self-regulated church for the needed bestowal of divine sanctity shifting the church from periphery to cultural centrality. Church leaders began to function as divine custodians implicitly trusted during times of life infused with deeper spiritual meaning.

The church enhanced its standing and contributed to communal stability by further emphasising its ability to provide ‘practical’ suggestions and solutions. Although the focus on life application extended to a variety of situations across the spectrum of life, at a communal level in Hajj Yusuf they were most keenly concentrated in the arenas of education, care for abandoned and orphaned children and employment. These segments were often specifically denied to southerners by the ruling regime and by intersecting in these areas churches not only provided meaningful practical help; they demarcated themselves socially from the enacted Islamic religio-nationalistic politics contributing to a second development.

The second significant impact of churches on the southern displaced community in Hajj Yusuf was the centralisation of politicised resistance within its own parameters. Due to the targeted destruction of church property and the ability of churches to collectively voice resistance across denominational and tribal boundaries the church served as the most potent symbol of politicised resistance. Fermo Ogilla elaborated:

Actually the government find it very hard because the more they tried to persecute actually it seems the more they are putting fire. And even when the northerners, Muslims, were attracted to Christianity at that time, big numbers, very big numbers. The more they were persecuted there was big excitement, especially among the young people. They don’t care for anything; they don’t care for their lives. They just go and preach.... So that was a big

³⁷⁶ Yohannes Benjamin, pastor of ECS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 21 March 2006, Khartoum.

time of excitement and I think the persecutions were good. It was good because it refined attitudes.³⁷⁷

There was growth in a collective civil religion that while not intentionally directed by the church, was articulated in terms of Christian solidarity and identification. Individuals were willing, at least temporarily, to subsume their own religious practice under the rubric of Christianity in order to resist and protest the government. At the local grassroots level in Hajj Yusuf churches were able to ease interaction with and between community elders and leaders though the relationship often remained tenuous. At an elite level though churches were unable to significantly influence the dominating Islamic narrative, the benefit to the community of lodging such defiance should not be underestimated.³⁷⁸ It further illustrates the willingness of the community to turn inwards to the church during times of difficulty perceiving that the church was a central component in providing guidance and establishing beneficial patterns of interaction.

It is important to note that in this way the influence of the church was more reactive than directive. One result is that while numerous, most likely even the majority of southerners displaced to Hajj Yusuf, self-associate themselves with Christianity this identification is shallow.³⁷⁹ The church is viewed as an important source for guidance and divine sanctification during times of life difficulties. Though this itself is an increase in the prestige of the church it is distinctly different from the churches in Kakuma Refugee Camp that developed an ability to actually shape culture from the forefront. In terms of locale nomenclature the church in Hajj Yusuf would therefore be labelled as 'central:' consistently turned to for guidance and the practical extension of divine sanctity, a collective voice for advocacy and resistance determined and advanced by southerners themselves and critically

³⁷⁷ Fermo Ogilla, interview with author, 18 March 2006.

³⁷⁸ Certainly the church was not the only form of popular protest. Though the story was dated the NIF banned the influential Sudanese authored *Season of Migration to the North* for the first time as it pointedly questioned post-colonialist politics, especially those dominated by an Islamic agenda. Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (London: Penguin Books: 1969). Furthermore although Islamic interpretation is central to the debate concerning human rights in Sudan, many of the problems, such as torture and a lack of legitimate judicial procedures and review, are more general in nature and are shared characteristics with secular and other religiously dominated governments that are socially repressive. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, "Islam and Human Rights: The Lessons from Sudan," *The Muslim World* 91, no. 3-4 (Fall 2001): 490.

³⁷⁹ When pressed a number of individuals stated that they believed that around 70-80% of southerners were Christian while the rest practiced Islam, traditional religion or both.

important in helping the displaced community procure beneficial interaction with the overarching dominant culture.

The geographical composition of Hajj Yusuf contributed to the development of the central status of the church. Hajj Yusuf is a loosely regulated settlement allowing for 'spontaneous' construction of new homes as IDPs and Muslim land-speculators arrived. The result is a patchwork of clumped southern enclaves bisected by larger Muslim neighbourhoods. In addition to making the convergence of large southern gatherings and communities difficult, for southerners this arrangement ensures a constant intermingling that reinforces minority status. In comparison to Kakuma there is furthermore an overt depression of emphasis on individual tribal allegiances. Overarching southern affiliations are therefore muted by the overriding Khartoum culture until activated by communal persecution most keenly felt in Hajj Yusuf at times of church property destruction. Times of church destruction were efficacious in prompting sudden southern solidarity for several important reasons. First, as tribes and traditional tribal loyalties had been geographically divided, local church destruction allowed a 'safe' commingling of whatever tribes were present. Second, in comparison to the large-scale destruction of displaced homes during the *kasha* programme, a united southern community could realistically face the force applied to the sporadic removal of various church buildings. Third, as all other organised institutions of resistance in the capital have been eradicated, the church was the predominant symbol of opposition with political, religious and cultural overtures. At times of church destruction southerners could therefore exert a united protest that would eventually re-dissipate.³⁸⁰ Displayed surges of reaction are a further acknowledgment of the importance of 'youth' rather than senior community leaders in terms of influencing overall church development. Therefore, while the influence of the church is important and substantial, it is centrally diffused throughout the community.

Recent post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement developments offer a further testimony to the nature of Christianity in Hajj Yusuf. Pastor Fermo Ogilla expounds:

³⁸⁰ 'When social identity is salient one acts *as a group member*, whereas, when personal identity is salient, one does not.' Times of overt church persecution enacted group identification and united group action. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg, "An Introduction to the Social Identity Approach," in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael Hogg (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 4.

In 90s when the war was so up the churches were growing very, very, very fast and also the persecution was very high when the government... on each side was maybe trying to do away with anything that was called church. Churches were growing at that time both spiritually and numerically they have been growing. Practically we have seen God's hand during those days. Now there is a kind of descending so it is... what I can call stability is coming.³⁸¹

Abraham Kuol further enunciated this theme:

During the time of war people came to Christianity in good number. Why, because they have been displaced from their places and they left their traditional worship and came in contact with Christianity and they come and join the Christianity and they continue in it... There were so many fellowships and then Bible Studies was always being done in the church. But... at this time there is no Bible Study. Churches do no more Bible Studies and at the same time the disputes in the churches have dropped the number of those who come and also the activities also become so low.³⁸²

The end of overt persecution of the church with the signing of the CPA, the corresponding removal of an active overarching enemy, the repatriation of numerous southerners and an expanding and diversified market in Khartoum all combined to reverse some of the recent gains to see a decrease in church attendance and perceived influence. These forces and pressures have been first felt by southerners living in greater Khartoum and may indicate a reality churches will soon face throughout southern Sudan. In Hajj Yusuf while the church retains a cultural centrality that substantially and beneficially influences the southern displaced community by bestowing divine and practical sacredness and centralised politicised resistance, among the most faithful communicants there is a new sense of realism and concern about the future of the church. Newly developed, this attitude foreshadows what has beset the community of Olijj Refugee Camp in Uganda.

³⁸¹ Fermo Ogilla, interview with author, 18 March 2006.

³⁸² Abraham Kuol, member of PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

B. Density of War: Olij Refugee Camp, Uganda

‘When they entered from Sudan they entered differently because they were traumatised. Everyday you are focusing on that, you are focusing on hunger, you are focusing on harassment.’

Terensio Alfred³⁸³

‘I think our biggest help is not really material things because we rely on other people to give to us... Our biggest help is we want to prepare people psychologically to accept their situation and then live in hope that one time they will go.’

Father Ananias Odaga³⁸⁴

Northern Uganda is rife with insecurity. Located on the far north-western frontier of Uganda, Adjumani town is an outpost on the crossroads of three competing currents: the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army, the Government of Sudan and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Travelling north on lonely dusty roads via the regular Gateway Bus Services requires for the last few hours of an eleven-hour journey a mandated military convoy. With five transition camps and twenty settlements flung around Adjumani the more than 60,000 southern Sudanese refugees are afforded no such protection.³⁸⁵ Rather, the Government of Sudan ‘targets them as hostile areas from which information on the SPLA could be gathered. The SPLA target them as rear bases to mobilize fighters and supplies, and the Lord’s Resistance Army, West Nile Bank Front, and other Ugandan rebel groups see them as supply replenishment centers.’³⁸⁶

Ugandan policy dictates that southern Sudanese refugees are sequestered into the Adjumani, Arura or Moyo district with refugees further subdivided into

³⁸³ Terensio Alfred, pastor of ECS-Torit congregation and Community Services Officer, interview with author, 11 April 2006, Olij Refugee Camp.

³⁸⁴ Father Ananias Odaga, Ugandan Catholic parish priest for Sudanese refugees in Adjumani District, interview with author, 15 April 2006, Adjumani.

³⁸⁵ Sudan Cultural Digest Project, *Coping with Dynamics of Culture and Change: Sudanese Refugees in East Africa and Internally Displaced Persons in Southern Sudan* (Cairo: Office of Africa Studies, American University in Cairo, 1998), 19.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

numerous settlements inclusive of pre-existing indigenous populations.³⁸⁷ Isolated into small communities Sudanese refugees experience constant flux and destabilisation. In 2000, for example, out of thirty-five ‘security incidents’ thirty were ‘attacks on refugee settlements.’³⁸⁸ One 2002 LRA raid on Maaji settlement witnessed one hundred twenty homes, five classrooms and a grinding mill razed forcing the entire settlement to abandon their cultivated land, possessions and houses.³⁸⁹ Between 2000 and 2003 there were fifty-two separate LRA incursions in Adjumani District alone.³⁹⁰

Posited with the numerically densest assemblage of southern Sudanese refugees, the Sudan-Uganda border has been a corridor of insecurity for the past century.³⁹¹ Recent events however compounded into a spiral of aggressive instability. Following the overthrow of Idi Amin, the fall of Obote’s second regime in 1985 and the ascendancy of current President Yoweri Museveni, a potent friction developed between Khartoum and Kampala.³⁹² After Uganda opened the doors to the SPLA, the Government of Sudan violated Ugandan airspace by launching frequent cross-border military flights that involved on occasion dropping bombs near

³⁸⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Appeal 2007 – Uganda,” *UNHCR* (December 2006), 1; available from <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/455443a1b.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 12 September 2007. Altogether there are 65 recognised Sudanese refugee communities dispersed over a territory of 600 kilometres. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Report 2004 – Uganda,” *UNHCR* (June 2005), 2; available from <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/42ad4dbd0.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 12 September 2007.

³⁸⁸ United Nations High Commission for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Report 2000 – Uganda,” *UNHCR* (June 2001), 168; available from <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/3e23eb730.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 12 September 2007.

³⁸⁹ “UNHCR Condemns Rebel Attack on Refugee Settlement in Uganda,” *United Nations High Commission for Refugees*, 10 July 2002, available from <http://www.unhcr.org/news/NEWS/3d2c49314.html>; Internet; accessed on 12 September 2007.

³⁹⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Self-Reliance Strategy (1999-2003) for Refugee Hosting Areas in Moyo, Arua and Adjumani Districts, Uganda: Report of the Mid-Term Review,” *UNHCR* (April 2004), 8, available from <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PROTECTION/41c6a4fc4.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 13 September 2007.

³⁹¹ Thomas P. Ofeansky, “Warfare and Instability Along the Sudan-Uganda Border: A Look at the 20th Century,” in *White Nile, Black Blood: War, Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 195-208.

³⁹² The political and military conflict surrounding Amin and Obote are important to the ongoing destabilisation of northern Uganda. See Phares Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hope* (London: Hurst & Company, 1992), 78-166; John Kiyaga-Nsubuga, “Managing Political Change: Uganda Under Museveni,” in *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution*, eds. Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), 13-34.

southern Sudanese refugee settlements.³⁹³ More importantly, the Government of Sudan facilitated the arming of the LRA encouraging attack against southern Sudanese civilians on both sides of the border.

Disillusioned, in the mid-1980s Alice Lakwena led her troops of seven to ten thousand men and women under the banner of the Holy Spirit Movement on a southern march to Kampala.³⁹⁴ Lakwena 'imposed a moral discipline on her soldiers, prohibiting charms, drunkenness, theft, smoking or rape before battle, but encouraging prayer and ritual cleansing, and the singing of Christian hymns.'³⁹⁵ Defeated at Jinja, only thirty miles north of Kampala, leadership of the movement shifted to her father Severino Lukoya from 1987-1989 and then merged with forces led by an individual claiming to be Lakwena's cousin: Joseph Kony.³⁹⁶

Finding solace and armaments courtesy of the Government of Sudan, Kony re-launched the movement as the Lord's Resistance Army vociferously attacking civilians and committing innumerable acts of horrendous atrocity. Rape, amputation, abduction, forced marriage and indiscriminate machete killing by hacking and mutilation spread throughout northern Uganda terrorising southern Sudanese refugees and Ugandan civil populations alike.³⁹⁷ More than 25,000 children in northern Uganda have been inflicted with forced child soldiering.³⁹⁸ Southern

³⁹³ Leben Nelson Moro, "Interethnic Relations in Exile: The Politics of Ethnicity among Sudanese Refugees in Uganda and Egypt," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 17, no. 4 (2004): 425.

³⁹⁴ Heike Behrend, "War in Northern Uganda: The Holy Spirit Movements of Alice Lakwena, Severino Lukoya and Joseph Kony (1986-97)," in *African Guerrillas*, ed. Christopher Clapham (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 107.

³⁹⁵ Kevin Ward, "The Church of Uganda Amidst Conflict: The Interplay Between Church & Politics in Uganda Since 1962," in *Religion & Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*, eds. Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle (London: James Currey, 1995), 102.

³⁹⁶ Heike Behrend, "War in Northern Uganda," 107. See also Kevin C. Dunn, "Uganda: The Lord's Resistance Army," in *African Guerrillas: Raging Against the Machine*, eds. Morten Boas and Kevin C. Dunn (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 131-49.

³⁹⁷ The limited literature that exists on individuals displaced by the LRA tends to be divided into separate discussions on either internally displaced Ugandans or re-displaced Sudanese refugees. With this bifurcation research often fails to traverse predetermined boundaries in pursuit of needed beneficial cross-fertilisation. Michael M. Cernea, "Bridging the Research Divide: Studying Refugees and Development Oustees," in *In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*, ed. Tim Allen (Geneva: UNRISD, 1996), 293-317.

³⁹⁸ Colin MacMullin and Maryanne Loughry, "Investigating Psychosocial Adjustment of Former Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone and Uganda," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 17, no. 4 (2004): 461. For the story of one such child soldier see Matthew Haumann, *Travelling with Soldiers and Bishops: Stories of Struggling People in Sudan* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004), 74-88. This itself is part of a recent broad popular and scholarly shift highlighting the plight of child soldiers. See for example the autobiographical account of Sierra Leone Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of*

Sudanese have been uprooted from refugee settlements fleeing without warning and forced to begin afresh processes of rehabilitation. The result is a critical density of war. As Vigdis Broch-Due notes, ‘the “density” of war is a matter of both topography and intimacy. War topography determines whether there are pockets of safety where some notion of normality in terms of production and everyday relationships can persevere... The intimacy of war concerns the social distance between combatants.’³⁹⁹ The seemingly illogical and repetitive nature of the attacks in conjunction with the intimacy of the horrendous acts witnessed and experienced has profoundly shaped the social memory and coping mechanisms of southern Sudanese refugees.⁴⁰⁰ As one individual angrily testified:

Civilians have been a big target and when they come it is a destruction, killing, real killing. I witnessed it by myself people killed by the LRA. They don’t want to use guns very much on civilians. They attacked, take them somewhere and hack them to death... One time I came I counted a heap of people killed in a compound, 14 of them... For them, the human being is the enemy... So psychologically it is a big torture... When they come and get you at night, because their movement is mainly at night, when they get you, they burn your house and kill all the children so it is really a very big psychological problem.⁴⁰¹

Located at the base of a gentle hill as the road flattens out and the banks of the Nile begin to shimmer in the near distance is a southern Sudanese community that has deeply experienced the psychological destabilisation of life in northern Uganda: Oliji Refugee Camp. Reaching Oliji requires one to travel the lone northern road from Adjumani, taking the westward fork near Robidire Refugee Camp and passing the southern refugee settlements of Alere 1 and 2 as well as several small Ugandan communities.⁴⁰² By vehicle the trip lasts approximately twenty to thirty

a Boy Soldier (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007), and the West African fictional work, Ahmadou Kourouma, *Allah is Not Obligated* (New York: Vintage, 2007).

³⁹⁹ Vigdis Broch-Due, “Violence and Belonging: Analytical Reflections,” in *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa*, ed. Vigdis Broch-Due (London: Routledge, 2005), 15-6.

⁴⁰⁰ Several hundred miles away, the profound effect that even a rumour of an approaching LRA force exerts on a community was personally witnessed in Yambio, south Sudan on 10 March 2006. As the rumour that the LRA was approaching circulated there was a visible air of nervousness and anxiety interrupting the community and forcing the stationing of SPLA soldiers around the town. Twelve days later the LRA did attack shooting and wounding two Bangladeshi UN personnel. “UN Troops Kill Three in South Sudan Firefight,” *Agence France-Presse*, 22 March 2007, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 27 March 2006.

⁴⁰¹ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

⁴⁰² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Uganda After Rebel Attack on Achol-Pii Camp,” *UNHCR Maps* (September 2002), available from <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/3c42f1df4.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 13 September 2007.

minutes. Comprised entirely of individuals from Equatoria, Olijji lies literally at the end of the road.⁴⁰³

According to the refugees, for Olijji the Nile has been the primary source of protection from the feared LRA. The Nile functions as a natural barrier that reduces the ability of the LRA to launch surprise offensives or to scatter during counterattacks.⁴⁰⁴ Whether true or not, Olijji has not experienced any direct assaults. Importantly, the Government of Uganda is not credited with protection and indeed, 'one of the most serious problems associated with many camps is the failure of the local authorities to provide full protection for refugees.'⁴⁰⁵ For southern Sudanese living in Olijji the perception that the Government of Uganda is either unable or unwilling to extend security increases the feeling of isolation in the midst of a hostile environment.

Although the Olijji settlement has not endured a direct attack, the residual collective memory of these assaults remains a potent force in the community. In fact the majority of the refugees residing in Olijji were not assigned to the community by the UN but individually relocated there from settlements that once ambushed by the LRA became places of fear. Out of the approximately 6,000 residents of Olijji, 2,578 were originally settled there by the UNHCR, the rest, close to 3,500, fled there.⁴⁰⁶ The refugee camp therefore is a bifurcated community partitioned into 'settlers' and 'displaced' with a profound impact on the security and destabilisation of Olijji.

The memories of these attacks are compounded by the nature of the violence. In an LRA raid some individuals are murdered, at times by just simply being beaten to death, others will disappear into the 'bush' without a body ever located, a few manage to escape passing along horrendous accounts and perhaps most damaging, when women are found alone in their huts they are instructed to provide food and supplies without ever discussing the situation on the risk of the LRA returning to

⁴⁰³ UNHCR policy has separated Dinka and Equatorians into their own communities in order to minimise friction. Those within Olijji stem primarily from central and western Equatoria whereas those in Kakuma Refugee Camp originated mostly in eastern Equatoria. Olijji, furthermore, is representative of tribal compositions found within the Democratic Republic of Congo.

⁴⁰⁴ Mojo Moses, member of ECS-Kajo Keji, interview with author, 19 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴⁰⁵ Mark Cutts, ed., *The State of the World's Refugees: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108.

⁴⁰⁶ Ajuko Olivia George, Welfare Refugee Chairman of Olijji, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

murder the individual and their family.⁴⁰⁷ The LRA psychologically undermines security increasing destabilisation and shock by inhibiting survivors from releasing their trauma to others and finding integrated healing. One refugee described the aftermath of an LRA attack:

Some people lost their people, their relatives. And then some people lost their belongings, their houses were burned just to the ground level to pieces. And then when they fled here there is no, there was no place for them for building a *tukul* sometime. And then no place for digging so they are facing a lot.⁴⁰⁸

That is, there are also ecological consequences that bring further hardship to the community.

UNHCR policy in Uganda actively promotes and relies upon a strategy of refugee self-reliance. Each family is allocated a small plot of land to cultivate supplemented with a small ration from the UN. In Olijj, climatic conditions in addition to the influx of more than three thousand unanticipated individuals have severely limited the ability of Sudanese to rely on this strategy. One UN report acknowledged, 'the path to self-sufficiency has also been adversely affected by shocks (i.e. climate and security). The review team has also questioned whether the self-reliance strategy can be largely based on land, given plot sizes, soil quality, non-rotation, and in some cases non-availability of land.'⁴⁰⁹ Due to limitations in the area many of the displaced in Olijj are not assigned a plot of land further adding to the tension and strain of the community and forcing them to choose between one of two predominant options.

The first option, promoted by the UNHCR, is the return of refugees to their original community even though security arrangements have not improved. In some instances men will travel to their assigned land for a period of time in an attempt to provide for their family. This solution however is risky, further isolates individuals and is not durable. The second option involves negotiating land-renting agreements from Ugandan landowners and is equally problematic. These arrangements are often legally informal and subject to the discretion of the owner leading to high fluctuating prices. Furthermore, as one individual expounded:

⁴⁰⁷ Gali Athanasius, lay reader and leader of ECS-Kajo Keji, and Mojo Moses, interview with author, 10 April 2006, Olijj Refugee Camp.

⁴⁰⁸ Terensio Alfred, interview with author, 11 April 2006.

⁴⁰⁹ UNHCR, "Self-Reliance Strategy," 9.

In some areas where they can cultivate, those areas the natives go at night and steal from their food and say, “you are digging in our land.” They just tell them directly, “don’t complain.” And then sometimes... the refugee women who go to the field and when the men are not there are being harassed by the natives. They harass them and even try to assault them sexually.⁴¹⁰

Emphasising self-reliance in an environment that actively strips the ability for self-reliance is doubly damaging especially as ‘access to land with *perceived* security of tenure – not necessarily conventional legal title – is highly instrumental in the consolidation process.’⁴¹¹ Furthermore, as land tenure is tied to democratic participation and representation, the displaced are denied access to political recourse.⁴¹² The Olijji refugee community situated in the midst of a destabilising dense war are therefore unable to consolidate processes of security, healing and political participation. However memory of LRA attack and torture is not the only memory living in the community.

A second enduring memory communally present inhibiting Sudanese consolidation is a select remembrance of treatment offered to Ugandan refugees who sought protection in Sudan following the fall of Idi Amin. Sudanese refugees distinguished between the reception offered to Ugandans and that extended to themselves insisting that Ugandan treatment of Sudanese was both ‘un-Christian’ and unbeneficial. Although this memory is largely contrived the effect is a highlighted perception of intractable difficulty and isolation.⁴¹³

Even though the refugees are residing in Uganda the memory of an ongoing assumed susceptibility to Sudanese Governmental infiltration further erodes pillars of communal confidence. Southern memory regarding past enslavement by northern Arabs has not diminished. Two individuals pressed that while modern day slavery might not exist, Khartoum regularly practices ‘indirect slavery’ that attempts to economically, culturally and religiously lock southerners out of the mainstream.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

⁴¹¹ Jonathan Baker and Roger Zetter, *Refugee and Labour Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review. Shelter Provision and Settlement Policies for Refugees: A State of the Art Review* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995), 45.

⁴¹² Theopholis Mono, elder of SPC, interview with author, 8 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴¹³ In reality, ‘those who entered the Sudan after 1981 found it difficult to acquire agricultural land.’ B. E. Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 53. For an authoritative introduction to the Ugandan refugees in the nearby southern Sudanese town of Yei see especially Ibid., 31-63, 76-88.

⁴¹⁴ Gali Athanasius and Mojo Moses, interview with author, 10 April 2006.

Several relayed stories of *janjawiid* poisoning meat along the border of Sudan so that ‘the meat is brought to the market at 9:00am [and] by midday it has turned to green.’⁴¹⁵ Although no one claimed to personally know someone thus poisoned any food item that came from the north had to be carefully inspected to see if it had been tampered with or poisoned.⁴¹⁶ Communal security is therefore undermined by active remembrance of LRA attack and the subsequent difficulties regarding life as ‘displaced’ refugees, memory of Sudanese treatment of Ugandan refugees and the assumed skilful ability of Arabs to inflict harm on southern Sudanese regardless of their location.

One result of these cumulative memories is an ongoing experience of impoverishment. Although southern Sudanese refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Khartoum also exist in situations of poverty, other currents, as has been illustrated, attenuate at least the perception of this experience. In Olijj, the community internalises the situation of poverty affecting attitudes, experiences of traumatising and in relation to the thesis, perception of and the areas in which the church influences the community. Although many would echo the sentiment of one elderly woman, ‘the church is not growing because of poverty,’ Olijj Refugee Camp is influenced by the churches in two important ways.⁴¹⁷

Encouraging Community Unification

Fractured and traumatised Olijj has seen its fair share of conflict, fighting and murders. One individual commented, ‘the fighting’s among the people you will find mostly... here, there are different tribes, many, so you will find that other tribes cannot communicate with other tribes so that one also will bring the conflict among them. And also you find people, other people just insulting people so that one also just brings conflict.’⁴¹⁸ In addition, alcoholic drinking can also be an instigator

⁴¹⁵ Andrew Onziga, Programme Manager of Education Access Africa, interview with author, 12 April 2006, Adjumani.

⁴¹⁶ Lodi Francis, pastor and Acting Overseer of SPC Adjumani District, interview with author, 8 April 2006, Olijj Refugee Camp.

⁴¹⁷ Ydith Poni, member of SPC, interview with author, 9 April 2006, Olijj Refugee Camp.

⁴¹⁸ Andrewgo Felix, catechist, interview with author, 12 April 2006, Olijj Refugee Camp.

behind these conflicts as one described, 'in Oligi here people drink [so] that the drink will take away their suffering.'⁴¹⁹ Events within Sudan also impact the community:

When we came here since Sudan you find that other relatives kill other relatives so people kill among themselves... When somebody kills somebody so that one there, there is revenge, you have to revenge. So that people think that at least for a year he or she is planning to revenge.⁴²⁰

Significantly although there has been conflict between tribes, it did not involve large-scale attacks. There was rather a greater predominance of killing among relatives and fellow community members. This is in part because among many of the smaller Equatorian tribes in central and western Equatoria 'the idea of a "tribe" is continually being negotiated... Most of the time "tribal" identity seems to be something rather abstract and remote from the concerns of daily life.'⁴²¹ In Oligi, as in much of northern Uganda, tribal and national identities are in constant flux shifting in an attempt by refugees to self-maximise each situation.⁴²²

In this context churches have played an important role in preaching against these conflicts and encouraging unification among the community. For example one SPC leader responded to a query about his thoughts on God, 'firstly that God is saviour, but not only saviour. When we say God is holy we refer to our life and we refer to the forgiveness that God has shown to us.... So at this relationship, [we show] this kind of forgiveness, this kind of reconciliation to each other.'⁴²³ This emphasis has filtered into the congregation. In relation to what he found helpful about the Bible, one SPC communicant responded, 'in the New Testament it is written rightly that we should love each other and forgive our enemies.'⁴²⁴

In addition to worship initiatives, various workshop endeavours have also afforded formal opportunities for churches to emphasise peacemaking while

⁴¹⁹ Oyuru Wilson, member of ECS-Torit, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Oligi Refugee Camp.

⁴²⁰ Andrewgo Felix, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁴²¹ Tim Allen, "Ethnicity & Tribalism on the Sudan-Uganda Border," in *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (London: James Currey, 1994), 138.

⁴²² Several scholars have documented this reality during both the first and second civil war. As one noted, among the Sudanese Acholi refugees 'many of them had in effect become Ugandans... It was the persecution of Acholis under Idi Amin's regime that eventually prompted them to reassert a Sudanese nationality.' Joshua O. Akol, "A Crisis of Expectations: Returning to Southern Sudan in the 1970s," in *When Refugees Go Home: African Experiences*, eds. Tim Allen and Hubert Morsink (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994), 91.

⁴²³ Theopholis Mono, interview with author, 8 April 2006.

⁴²⁴ Timon Tela, member of SPC, interview with author, 9 April 2006, Oligi Refugee Camp.

extending practical guidelines for interaction. Father Ananias Odaga described, ‘we have workshops for peace and justice. This is one of the things we do in the camps... how people can relate together this small thing we do.’⁴²⁵ This focus has important ramifications for communal solidarity, security and stabilisation. As one ECS pastor claimed, ‘now we built the reconciliation again within the camp here.’⁴²⁶

Importantly although the church has beneficially enhanced communal stabilisation and reconciliation through these endeavours its importance should not be overstated. As the leading Catholic catechist in Oligi noted, ‘there is a peace but not deep but a select peace but now people are united.’⁴²⁷ This statement indicates several important elements. First, there has been a reduction in violence between southern Sudanese refugees living in Oligi. Second, this stems from a newfound unity that to a large extent was popularised by the churches and Christian spirituality and vernacular. Third, this peace is ‘not deep’ or rooted into a transformed community. Related, the peace is ‘select,’ that is, the memory of necessitated revenge killing, though subdued, remains alive underneath the surface of the community. Peace is therefore shallow and unclear if it will hold following repatriation. All the same, the Ugandan context and church emphasis has helped engineer a veneer of peace within the community based primarily on a philosophy of communal unity in suffering. As the Catholic priest observed, ‘it is part of our work to preach unity, unity, first we are human beings... Secondly, we are one nation... We have come out of the country for one problem, the war, which has brought us out. There is no need to divide so it is part of our work as Christians to work for unity.’⁴²⁸

Near the centre of Oligi community, just north of the market, is the Catholic chapel, host to the largest congregation in Oligi. This church has the clearest articulation of a related theology of ecumenical unity in the face of suffering. As one of the members expressed, ‘the person who is praying in different denomination... you are not to oppose it so that you live as one because Jesus said we are one... we live as one. Yes, you show no difference between you and other congregations or

⁴²⁵ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

⁴²⁶ Terensio Alfred, interview with author, 11 April 2006.

⁴²⁷ Andrewgo Felix, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁴²⁸ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

denominations... Those people who are praying in other churches God also loved them.’⁴²⁹ The rationale behind this new emphasis on denominational spiritual similarity and cooperation stems from an active memory of previous detrimental church competition:

Last time in Sudan people were not growing, the church was not growing because there is difference in churches, in other church, people are opposing each other. That one will oppose the other church and that one will oppose that one. “Ours is the one which God like it.” And now people are trying to convert people from other churches to come into their chapel and their church so that they live together with them by opposing the other one. But now people are sticking in their faith that in church when I hear the word of God then God will like me and also I will have eternal life when I believe in him. So now people are not moving... people are sticking in one church.⁴³⁰

In past experiences denominational affiliation was communally divisive increasing competition, opposition and societal segmentation.⁴³¹ In Olijj churches have largely overcome this partition through focusing on an overarching unity of shared spirituality. As catechist Andrewgo Felix articulated, ‘we come to realise that we are using the same words of God. That means we see no difference now.’⁴³² This development, arising out of the refugee experience, was not unique to the Catholic Church and produces a theological spirituality that underpins other broad communal unification endeavours, such as interpersonal reconciliation, by focusing on the commonality of shared approaches to accessing God. The churches therefore contributed to a vague spirituality that loosely functioned as a moralising and stabilising civil religion emphasising communal unification. Although the ecumenism is not a deep unification on the basis of theological examination and re-articulation it does contribute to a common platform of interaction that avoids a memory of divisive suffering.

Christianity is not the only active religion in Olijj Refugee Camp. Within viewing distance of the Catholic chapel is a small nondescript mosque with

⁴²⁹ Emmanuel Biala, member of Catholic Church, interview with author, 12 April 2006, Olijj Refugee Camp.

⁴³⁰ Fibicio Marrio, member of Catholic Church, interview with author, 12 April 2006, Olijj Refugee Camp.

⁴³¹ One of the most damaging examples of the divisiveness that denominational affiliation has caused in western Equatoria occurred among the ECS in Yambio during the 1930s. The community was split along several exclusive theological strands and the missionary, Arthur Riley, was threatened with poisoning. The schism was eventually healed and the groups reconciled though the tension is still remembered. For more from the perspective of the missionary see Grace Riley, *No Drums at Dawn: A Biography of the Reverend A. B. H. Riley, Pioneer Missionary in the Sudan* (Melbourne: Church Missionary Historical, 1972).

⁴³² Andrewgo Felix, interview with author, 12 April 2006.



Figure 18 – Mosque in Olibi Refugee Camp

approximately fifteen regular worshippers. In general the community appears to accept that the church and mosque worship the same God, even though distinctions regarding Christ are demarcated, and according to at least one elder Muslim, the mosque stands firmly behind the SPLA and maintains basic good and open relations with Olibi

Christians.⁴³³ While the Muslim community remains a small minority with little apparent communal influence, there is a much more open and vibrant third religious current in Olibi: African Traditional Religion.

Eduru Alex relayed the following account regarding the origin of his wife's ability to function as a traditional healer:

One cannot apply for it or say I intend to do it. It doesn't come that way... Let me give you the direct example of my wife. My wife and I married in 1968, 1968 it was December 28 Saturday in the church. We stayed for about five months together in the church, it was about up to May the next year when these things happened. To me it was new but the parents they knew. When the girl was still very young these spirits attacked her. They found a way of sort of stopping or closing the spirits so as not to disturb her temporarily. And when she came to my place these things opened... What did I do? I took her back to her parents... They closed those things there. Then she stayed for many years until we got the children... Then the disturbances started. It was so serious it made me lose my job... She would eat three spoonfuls of porridge in a day... For two months... she would jump up and down like this... and I don't know what she is doing... I had to take over the children. It was a hard time.⁴³⁴

In 1993 it was agreed that a traditional healer should be employed and following his consultation the wife fully recovered, regained normal behaviour and began helping other individuals disturbed by spirits and in need of healing.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Suleiman, member of Islamic mosque, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Olibi Refugee Camp.

⁴³⁴ Eduru Alex, husband and medicinal procurer of the African Traditional Religion practitioner, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Olibi Refugee Camp.

⁴³⁵ The call as it was received according to Alex is fairly typical. As Jean Buxton notes, 'all Calls are ultimately seen to "come from the Creator..." Even if the Call is initially rejected, as it may be, it is believed that the chosen individual must eventually acquiesce, because otherwise he or his family will continue to suffer chronic Call signs (sickness and so forth).' Jean Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandari* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 277.

According to Alex, who manages the business aspects of his wife's endeavours, a number of individuals in the community seek their help: 'There are some who come at night, especially church leaders... Some others... they don't come but they send their relatives.'⁴³⁶ Indeed the sound of their drum was quite discernable with the most common serious complaint given to the practitioners one of 'white ghosts... spirits that come from trees, rivers, mountains, these are the sources... They come close to us here.'⁴³⁷ Although a number of Christians profess a belief that these individuals continue in this practice simply for economic rationales,⁴³⁸ at the same time some Christians admitted encountering talking mountain, tree or river spirits with the power to disturb individuals.⁴³⁹

Although a full analysis was not possible, if Alex's assertion that a number of Christian individuals petition their services, a fact conceded by several church leaders, it is possible to ascertain that a number of individuals blend traditional and Christian elements in their daily practice. In a setting of traumatising and uncertain physical security it is unsurprising that 'the impersonal, the unseen and the unpredictable spirit powers makes people search for power which can help in this dangerous world, where fate, evil and death abound.'⁴⁴⁰ Though referencing the experience of the related Equatorian Kuku tribe seeking refuge in northern Uganda

⁴³⁶ Eduru Alex, interview with author, 14 April 2006.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Taban Bernard, for example, went so far as to even suggest that some practitioners actually concoct drugs that will induce madness in others in order to extend their business. Taban Bernard, member of ECS-Kajo Keji, interview with author, 16 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴³⁹ Rev Emmanuel, former pastor of ECS Maaji Refugee Camp, interview with author, 16 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp. Similarly, Azande, historically the most powerful and influential tribe in western Equatoria, 'make no clear distinction between the Supreme Being and the ghosts and these notions overlap one another.' E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Zande Theology," in *Essays in Social Anthropology* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 198. Furthermore, the Supreme Being (*Mbori*) as well as ghosts are thought to reside in the heads of streams and are vaguely connected to the issuance of rain, a perennial problem in Olijji. Ibid., 198. For an historical overview of the Azande with particular attention to the kingdom of Gbudwe (Yambio), E. E. Evans-Pritchard *The Azande: History and Political Institutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 267-395. For a critique of Evans-Pritchard, Michael Singleton, "Theology, 'Zande Theology' and Secular Theology," in *Zande Themes: Essays Presented to Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard*, eds. Andre Sinter and Brian V. Street (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 130-57; Berel Dov Lerner, "Magic, Religion and Secularity among the Azande and Nuer," in *Indigenous Religions: A Companion* (London: Cassell, 2000), 113-24.

⁴⁴⁰ Yusufu Turaki, "African Traditional Religions as a Basis for Understanding Spiritual Conflict in Africa," in *Deliver Us From Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, eds. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunbo Adeyemo, David G. Burnett, Bryant L. Myers and Hwa Yung (Monrovia: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2002), 166.

during the first civil war, the description of scholar Scopas Sekwat Poggo is still equally applicable to the Olijji context:

The Kuku people who became Christians did not, however, have a radical change in their traditional way of life. Rather, they chose some aspects of the Christian religion that did not conflict with their own traditional religion, values, norms, and customs... In the final analysis, the Kuku people do not have a determined attachment to either the Kuku traditional religion or Christianity. Rather, they strive to strike a balance between the two religions as an insurance for peace and tranquillity in their own society.⁴⁴¹

Even though many individuals within Olijji Refugee Camp likely synthesise Christian and traditional practices at a personal experiential level, from a communal perspective the role and influence of 'traditional' religion has been subsumed into a broader Christian framework. For example, divination and healing occur during weekday 'working hours' but never on Sunday as 'Sunday we leave to God.'⁴⁴² This is perhaps in part a result of Alex's ongoing regular attendance of Sunday mass, a habit he has maintained since childhood. Though currently barred from communion, Alex emphasised that Sunday is a day for honouring God through abstention from work. Furthermore, traditionally certain forms of divination were public events of 'some importance, and those who live in the neighbourhood regard them as interesting spectacles well worth a short walk.'⁴⁴³ In Olijji these divinations have lost their public appeal functioning now as a more private affair discreetly engaged to relieve symptoms of suffering. Traditional religion has shifted to a more personal and individual religious experience that though very important has been disassociated from some of the broader implications for communal living, solidarity and security.⁴⁴⁴ This disengagement is seen most clearly in the fact that although spirits and commingled deceased ancestors remain a prevalent reality for many southern Sudanese refugees living in Olijji, death rites, funeral and mourning

⁴⁴¹ Scopas Sekwat Poggo, "Kuku Religious Experiences in the Sudan and in Exile in Uganda 1900-1972," in *Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999*, eds. Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 135.

⁴⁴² Eduru Alex, interview with author, 14 April 2006.

⁴⁴³ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 154.

⁴⁴⁴ At an individual level, beyond the scope of the thesis, it is probable that the utilisation of traditional tools to minimise active spirit involvement is beneficial in procuring understanding and control over traumatic refugee experiences. Tim Allen notes that when northern Ugandans repatriated from Sudan 'the emergence of a new possession cult seemed to play an important part in allowing people to come to terms with what had happened.' Tim Allen and David Turton, "Introduction: In Search of Cool Ground," in *In Search Of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*, ed. Tim Allen (Geneva: UNRISD, 1996), 12.

practices have undergone a significant transformation squarely locating them within a publicly adhered rubric of Christian articulated civil religion.

Father Ananias Odaga clearly expressed the estimation that the community perceives the church as an important source for spiritual acuity during times of sickness and death:

When there is somebody sick they rush to us the priest to go and offer prayer... They will never wish somebody to die without being helped I mean spiritually helped... From time to time in case there is death already they can call the priest to go and pray just for the thing, the burial and so forth. And if the priest cannot go they need the church leader whether the protestant church or the Catholic or whatever it depends on the denomination... and that can help them psychologically that there is a God who is helping them.⁴⁴⁵

Traditional burials and periods of mourning were expensive and at times even violent occasions for close family members. As one individual noted, 'this old traditional has left... Church has replaced [it]. It has lifted that burden, that burden because when someone dies in your home there is a big burden, which is disturbed by the uncles, but now the church has lifted that burden.'⁴⁴⁶

Churches are therefore helping the community shoulder the costs associated with death and easing a time of tension that had previously proven a flashpoint for conflict. As Judith Onesemo described, 'when somebody dies... this traditional performance is going [down] because of influence of the church.'⁴⁴⁷ Certainly times of sickness and burial are not the only occasions that churches promote a beneficial solidarity. As one individual stated, 'the women's fellowship it is supposed to go and encourage the people... The women will be able to come and share the hardship together.'⁴⁴⁸ Another responded that the importance of corporate worship was 'coming together... because if you are not coming together you cannot understand each other. So if you come together then you discuss, and then you pray together [and] God comes to help.'⁴⁴⁹ All the same in terms of promoting communally beneficial interactions, efforts to transition burial ceremonies into a Christianised paradigm that were stabilising and reconciling proved predominant. One SPC leader assured, 'most of the funerals are being handled by the church, but before we did not

⁴⁴⁵ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

⁴⁴⁶ Sequonda Wilson, member of ECS-Torit, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Olij Refugee Camp.

⁴⁴⁷ Judith Onesemo, member of ECS-Torit, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Olij Refugee Camp.

⁴⁴⁸ Poni Grace, member of SPC, interview with author, 9 April 2006, Olij Refugee Camp.

⁴⁴⁹ Jerisa Meling, women's leader of SPC, interview with author, 8 April 2006, Olij Refugee Camp.

see that. The funerals had been handled in the way that we Africans know it.’⁴⁵⁰

From providing mechanisms for reconciliation, contributing to a decrease in societal conflict, easing denominational divisions and standing in solidarity with individuals in grief, churches have greatly encouraged communal unification in a context of isolating trauma. The churches have been effective in this regard in part because they have beneficially influenced the Olijji community in a second principal manner.

Pointing to a Secure Hope

Meeting in a classroom on the far northern edges of Olijji Refugee Camp Lodi Francis, a pastor for the Sudan Pentecostal Church, affirmed during one sermon:

Our situation is not good. We are having problems, hardships in our families. And the life is difficult for us. Sometimes we are thinking, we are thinking, is God really there? I need to know... And you don't know, you don't understand, and you don't see. He can see each of them, he knows each of your problems. He knows all the plans written for you. So the Lord said you have to get advice from him and he will help us.⁴⁵¹

As already noted a number of difficulties threaten to overwhelm the community of Olijji stripping security, dignity and ultimately trust. Trauma, violence and anxious uncertainty are daily realities. In this context churches exert an often-underappreciated encouragement with important communal stabilising implications related to psychological morale, motivation and improvement: hope.

Theologically this hope was most clearly articulated in the importance and expectation of an eternal life of peace in heaven, a focus consistently denoted in all of the approached denominations in Olijji. For example one gentleman among the Catholic congregation described, '[it is] through the Bible so that we learn there is eternal life in the future... Eternal life is so important because that is the life which you get where there is no more suffering.'⁴⁵² Responding to a question concerning the very first thing one thinks of when considering God one SPC communicant emphasised, 'for me the first thing I think of God, it is the eternal life.'⁴⁵³ Sequonda

⁴⁵⁰ Theopholis Mono, elder of SPC, interview with author, 14 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴⁵¹ Lodi Francis, pastor and Acting Overseer of SPC Adjumani District, recorded by author, 9 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴⁵² Eremugo Alfred, member of Catholic Church, interview with author, 12 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴⁵³ Jerisa Meling, interview with author, 8 April 2006.

Wilson, member of ECS-Torit, stated in relation to the most significant encouragement stemming from the Bible, 'Jesus came down from heaven for us and he promised that he will go to heaven to prepare a place for us and take us to that home where we shall live together and that is the most encouraging part.'⁴⁵⁴

Connecting the alleviation of suffering in this world with the security of an eternal peace mediated through the message of the church helps clarify the growth behind the importance of Christian affiliated burial ceremonies. Certainly the church emphasises its own role in this process as evidenced by what the ECS-Kajo Keji leader noted as the primary focus of his teaching, 'this is my vision, my vision when I preach to them, God says if you believe in him... your soul will go to him.'⁴⁵⁵ Among the SPC one individual expressed that he converted to Christianity following his flight to refuge in northern Uganda and subsequent displacement due to LRA incursions because of the promised new life in the coming eternal 'new world.'⁴⁵⁶ That is while heaven or the 'new world' often remains nondescript in terms of life and personal subsistence, it does carry connotations of peace, security, happiness and provision, all elements missing in the daily existence of Olijji Refugee Camp.



Figure 19 – Good Friday Mass, Olijji Refugee Camp

One elder member of the ECS-Torit congregation maintained, 'the first thing that comes to his mind is the forgiveness that has been made and the promise of eternal life that he has given so he will be happy to go there.'⁴⁵⁷ At the same time it is clear that a number of Christians retain a belief, even if discreetly, in spirits and ancestors. One reason for the influence of heaven therefore, is that it is both a continuation of a traditional worldview that blends God, spirits and eschatological belief while also providing a sharper sense of beneficial clarity in the language of Christian conceptions.

⁴⁵⁴ Sequonda Wilson, interview with author, 14 April 2006.

⁴⁵⁵ Gali Athanasius, interview with author, 10 April 2006.

⁴⁵⁶ Bulson Buli, member of SPC Adjumani, interview with author, 6 April 2006, Adjumani.

⁴⁵⁷ Oyuru Wilson, interview with author, 14 April 2006.

In this context it is possible to understand that focus on heaven is in part escapist. There is clearly a construction of an alternate reality that reverses the loss and disintegration experienced that for many refugees, as noted in the excerpt from Lodi Francis' sermon, is often non-comprehensible. However it is important to maintain that there is not a total separation or disassociation from reality experienced within the camp. Rather, the focus on promised unalterable security confers hope otherwise missing and in Olijj, the church is cognisant of its role and ability to endow this encouragement.

Olijj Refugee Camp is a community that has been severely traumatised. As Guus Van der Veer notes, 'traumatization refers to extreme, painful experiences which are so difficult to cope with that they are likely to result in psychological dysfunction both in the short and in the long term.'⁴⁵⁸ Often undervalued the church posits a secure hope that is critical in stabilisation and healing. Father Ananias Odaga confirmed, 'our biggest help, our target, and we wish to continue with it, is to prepare the people to be psychologically healed.'⁴⁵⁹ In terms of communal stabilisation therefore, by granting access to a secure source of hope the church helps mitigate negative traumatising and dysfunction further tendering communal solidarity, stabilisation, encouragement and persevering motivation.

Analysis and Conclusion

Olijj Refugee Camp faces a number of overwhelming difficulties as illustrated in the following exchange:

David: For him he was telling that the experience of shortness of land, the shortness of food, there is no proper feeding for them.

Fibicio: And also they have experienced the problem of health so the medicine they don't have for the community, they are still facing the problem.

Dali: And also they experience the problem of education. When you like to send your daughters for the higher studies you are not able to do that.

⁴⁵⁸ Guus Van der Veer, *Counselling and Therapy with Refugees and Victims of Trauma: Psychological Problems of Victims of War, Torture and Repression* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 4.

⁴⁵⁹ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

Eremugo: And also they experience the problems of insecurity. Now other peoples leave their settlements place and come here and the place became crowded so they experience that one, insecurity problem.⁴⁶⁰

The LRA has ravaged northern Uganda displacing more than three thousand additional southern Sudanese refugees to the community of Olijji. Fear of LRA attack and retaliation remains a living memory that is further compounded by a perceived remembrance of treatment of Ugandans who had previously sought refuge in Sudan and by traditional inter-southern revenge cycles. The cumulative result is an increasing density of war producing intense trauma and isolation.

In this context churches have increased stability and benefited the community in several key ways. First, churches are involved in promoting and increasing reconciliation among members of the community. As Dali Dadauto noted, 'the church helped people to become united through reconciliation.'⁴⁶¹ Related, churches tempered traditional burial practices in a manner that added comfort, peace, solidarity and communal unification. Finally, churches enabled broad access to a 'new world' dubbed 'heaven' that posited within the community a source of secure hope.

However, despite these influences, the overarching perception regarding the influence of the churches on the community by the Sudanese refugees themselves was most often labelled as 'poor' or 'low.' As one individual stated, 'the church is planning on preaching the word of God but only power is not there.'⁴⁶² There appears to be two predominant rationales behind this self-articulated assessment.

First, churches in Olijji are often associated with women. Jerisa Meling of the SPC observed, 'let me say in all the churches, the majority are women. And these women, the majority of them are those who do not have husbands, the widows.'⁴⁶³ Eunice Kojo of ECS-Kajo Keji confirmed, 'the church may be full of believers [but] most of them are the women.'⁴⁶⁴ Traditionally women are often denigrated, cast into second-class moulds and given little public prominence or input into cultural

⁴⁶⁰ David Oleca, Fibicio Marrio, Dali Dadauto, Eremugo Alfred, members of Catholic Church, interview with author, 12 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴⁶¹ Dali Dadauto, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁴⁶² Geri Dennis, member of SPC, interview with author, 9 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

⁴⁶³ Jerisa Meling, interview with author, 8 April 2006.

⁴⁶⁴ Eunice Kojo, member of ECS-Kajo Keji, interview with author, 8 April 2006, Olijji Refugee Camp.

development. In this instance the communally estimated correlation between church and women increases the perception that churches offers little beneficial influence to the community. Significantly the church has not actively challenged this perception or overtly attempted to increase gender equality.

A second and more important reason related to the perceived inability of churches to significantly influence the community centres on the assumption that church membership equates material assistance. One prominent leader disparaged, 'they think that if they go to the church then they will obtain what they want from there. Other people go there for women or other things because they want to obtain something from the church, not to get any truth.'⁴⁶⁵ As churches are generally unable to contribute within this arena some within the community 'tend to think as if God is a burden so with that we have the experience that some believers have gone back.'⁴⁶⁶ To a large extent churches have internalised this value so that one leader declared, 'actually here there is no help that we have... because we have no support from anywhere then the church cannot help.'⁴⁶⁷ Churches in Olijji perceive themselves as poor and have consequently developed an attitude of outside dependence that displaces alternative forms of creative interaction and diminishes the possible influence churches could exert on the community.⁴⁶⁸ If the churches in Kakuma were conceptualised as at the forefront, Khartoum in the centre, Olijji would be labelled as 'low,' at the 'end' or even 'falling behind.'

Importantly, actual church influence was higher than the common perception. The churches wield a strong sway on the community through their encouragement of communal unification via interpersonal and familial reconciliation, denominational ecumenism and proffered solidarity during times of sickness and death as well as the depositing of a secure and accessible hope articulated as a mirroring reality. There is a loose but underlying civil spirituality couched in Christian terms and practice

⁴⁶⁵ Lodi Francis, interview with author, 8 April 2006.

⁴⁶⁶ Theopholis Mono, interview with author, 8 April 2006.

⁴⁶⁷ Mojo Moses, interview with author, 10 April 2006.

⁴⁶⁸ For the social identity theory, 'the individual's own context (history, interpretation of the present situation, and anticipation of the future events) plays at least as important a role as does the social situations in determining the salience of personal/social identity.' Stephen Worchel, "A Development View of the Search for Group Identity," in *Social Identity: International Perspectives*, eds. Stephen Worchel, J. Francisco Morales, Dario Paez and Jean-Claude Deschamps (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 55.

underpinning the communal stability. This was perhaps most clearly articulated by Eduru Alex, the husband of the leading African Traditional Religion practitioner who responded to his conception regarding the influence of the churches: 'It is big... There is no, there is no old way of mourning, of crying, of beating the house, these things are not there, people now sit down to pray, to pray for the dead and pray also for those who remain alive. It is good.'⁴⁶⁹ Therefore, while the influence of the churches is higher than generally perceived, it is still limited. As one scholar denoted:

The characterization of sociocultural displacement as a condition of disintegration does not imply that the displaced are unable to give meaning to their existence in suffering. Nevertheless, their coping responses mask uncertainty, anxiety, and stress; the most important social control mechanism is not internalized values and norms but the threat of the superior power.⁴⁷⁰

In Oligi Refugee Camp the ongoing superior threat of intense suffering serves as the primary motivating factor yielding communal unity. As one individual conveyed, the 'problems they have faced together is uniting them, the problems are so great for them. And then here they are suffering equally. They are all being taken care of by UN. They don't have food, they have to share equally so there is no point for them to be disunited.'⁴⁷¹ Though the influence of the churches is greater than typically articulated by communicants due to churches contribution to reconciliation, hope and underlying shared spiritual religiosity, this influence is limited and uncertain to meaningfully extend beyond the Oligi refugee experience. This limitation, though certainly substantiated by the overwhelming and demoralising broader external factors, is more importantly the result of a failure by the churches to creatively maximise their own resources, imagine alternatives or mobilise constituents. The most important limitations are self-imposed limitations. Therefore, although the churches have beneficially contributed to communal stability and reconciliation, in Oligi Refugee Camp the churches' influence is best understood by the internalised perception of poverty posturing church influence as an actively decreasing reality positioned as behind or at the end of the culture.

⁴⁶⁹ Eduru Alex, interview with author, 14 April 2006.

⁴⁷⁰ Salah El-Din El Shazali Ibrahim, "War Displacement: The Sociocultural Dimension," in *War and Drought in Sudan: Essays on Population Displacement*, ed. Eltigani E. Eltigani (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 45.

⁴⁷¹ Father Ananias Odaga, interview with author, 15 April 2006.

Chapter Four

Convergence Along the Road

‘When the Sudan came into war people looked, asked and changed their thinking from traditional [religion] to look for God in their trouble. Therefore the church became full of people because of persecution.’

Isaac Cham Jwok⁴⁷²

‘Anyway we cannot actually compare our suffering to Jesus’ suffering. A human being was born to suffer. Because Jesus suffered for us, we actually have hope’

Daniel Aketch⁴⁷³

Underneath the palm fronds of an open wooden-poled community centre in a far southwestern corner of south Sudan the community gathered in a cleared field adjacent to the sole muddy football pitch. With the atmosphere full of anticipation the gathering is graced with a number of local notables – the Acting Governor of the State, the Cabinet and many of Western Equatoria’s State MPs. Spread around the perimeter a line of machinegun wielding SPLA soldiers casually observed as a long line of women marched from the Women’s Centre to the middle of the clearing. The celebration for the International Day of Women can now officially commence and it begins just as it will end: with a prayer of Christian thanksgiving. Bracketed between these two prayers speeches were offered and songs were sung in the format established by the County Commissioner, a greeting in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the utilisation of the Bible as a reference point, standard and example.⁴⁷⁴

Unheralded and unnoticed by the international community this small celebration in Yambio highlighted in a very public display the ability of a Christian spirituality to infuse and underpin every aspect of the southern Sudanese landscape, ideology, aspirations and civil society. Evidenced in the celebration and in the three refugee settings of Kakuma, Khartoum and Olijj, although Christianity has varied in

⁴⁷² Isaac Cham Jwok, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

⁴⁷³ Daniel Aketch, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

⁴⁷⁴ Commissioner of Yambio County, recorded by author, 8 March 2006, Yambio.

the extent of its impact on the community, its influence has substantially grown numerically, communally and in articulation of a loose and nascent civil religion. This chapter will delineate rationales related to the recent Christian acceleration, compare and contrast overlapping areas of convergence between the three camps and more thoroughly demarcate indicators of a national emergence of a Christian influenced civil religion in south Sudan.

Converging Growth: Rationales Behind Christian Expansion

Christianity has grown among southern Sudanese for a variety of rationales first understood as a counteracting balance to a perceived threat of external forces. At a national level this is best understood as resistance to a threat of Islamic assimilation. A number of respondents noted that they believed the recent growth in Christianity was intimately related to the persecution of southerners. Most clearly and consistently expressed among the displaced of Hajj Yusuf, Khartoum one individual for example noted, ‘during the war, the time of war, the preaching was strong. Christians were facing the persecution but at the same time they were resisting to preach.’⁴⁷⁵ Another stated, ‘at that time when the government here decided that the war should be *jihad*... even the Muslims, the southern Muslims who used to be Muslims changed to Christianity.’⁴⁷⁶ Broadly representative of a sentiment resonating throughout southern Sudan one refugee in Uganda echoed, ‘we have to reach our people so that they may not be consumed by the Islamic religion.’⁴⁷⁷

Importantly however, while a number of individuals perceived Christianity as a potential tool for resistance, for the majority of southern Sudanese the war was not conceptualised primarily in terms of Christian-Islamic conflict. In fact such a schema of interpretation is more consistently applied by the international community and at times, even by the Government of Sudan.⁴⁷⁸ The result therefore is that ‘the

⁴⁷⁵ Peter Kai Thon, ruling elder of PCOS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

⁴⁷⁶ Fermo Ogilla, interview with author, 18 March 2006.

⁴⁷⁷ Terensio Alfred, interview with author, 11 April 2006.

⁴⁷⁸ For example Nina Shea, *In the Lion's Den: A Shocking Account of Persecution and Martyrdom of Christians Today and How We Should Respond* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), 31-5.

problem here is not religion but those who politicise it for political and economic ends.’⁴⁷⁹ A number of southern Sudanese expressed an ambiguity concerning the nature of Islam as a religion, as is partially demonstrated by the ongoing participation in Islamic practice in Olij Refugee Camp, while clearly differentiating that the ruling Sudanese governmental regime was unacceptable. Expressing the multi-dimensional nature of the root causes of the war one cleric in Kakuma stated:

You can know the real problems of Sudan. One, we are different from our colour. They are the Arab world that is the one thing. The second is that... we are Christians, they are Muslims... They want us to be submissive to them. If you do not want to be submissive to them they want to kill us all, the southerners in Sudan. It is not because of one person who ruled the country, Omar Bashir. Is it all the people because they say that we [northerners] are Arab and we [southerners] are African.⁴⁸⁰

Whereas displaced in Khartoum frequently utilised religious vernacular to frame conceptual conflicts, refugees in Uganda more often referred to broad and vague notions of problems with ‘Arabs.’ This is in part because for the majority of Equatorians negative interaction with governmental forces has not revolved around religious ideology but the deeply damaging disturbances of the LRA, for which the Government of Sudan is partially blamed. As one gentleman declared, ‘Omar Bashir has given their place, Eastern Equatoria, to the LRA. Now LRA is disturbing people there... And that one is the promise of Omar.’⁴⁸¹ Further validated by the research undertaken in Kakuma Refugee Camp, the majority of southern Sudanese understand the war as a religio-nationalistic conflict with multiple and overlapping causes in which Christianity offers one form of active resistance.

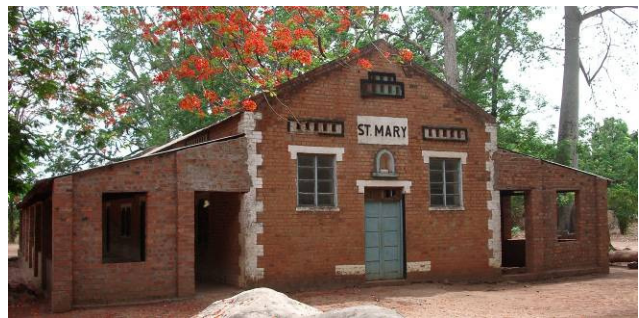


Figure 20 – St Mary’s Catholic Chapel, Yambio

At a local level within the refugee context churches in all three settings offered a second format of resistance as cultural custodian. Labelled discriminatorily

⁴⁷⁹ Mario Awet, “A State Based on Shared Ethical Values,” in *Self-Determination, The Oil and Gas Sector and Religion and the State in the Sudan* (London: African Renaissance Institute and Relationships Foundation International, 2002), 238.

⁴⁸⁰ Peter Kai Nyon, interview with author, 6 February 2006.

⁴⁸¹ Fibicio Marrio, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

as ‘refugees’ by both northern Sudanese and the international community, southern Sudanese inhabited a space predominantly stripped of choice, control and cultural continuity.⁴⁸² As was explored, particularly in Chapter Two, church format, teaching and practice maintained substantive parallels with traditional patterns of societal organisation and expression. By offering opportunities for advancement and southern demarcation outside the control of external agencies in a format both flexible and largely analogous to traditional approaches, churches exerted a powerful positive influence on the community that significantly increased the appeal, at least temporarily, of Christianity. Producing beneficial outcomes in terms of communal stabilisation churches helped southern Sudanese resist, interpret and adapt to settings of destabilisation and disempowerment.

At a national level therefore, Christianity supplied the vernacular and to a certain though limited extent communal identification, while at the local level churches functioned as the actual mechanism for resistance by providing a forum for cultural continuity, maintenance and adaptation. Christianity attracted a number of new adherents bolstering its numerical baseline precisely because it first operated as a counterbalancing tool of resistance.

A second predominant reason for the rapid expansion of Christianity among southern Sudanese relates to the communal benefits offered by the churches in all three settings. To varying degrees the churches in Kakuma, Khartoum and Oliji efficaciously responded to forces of social division by promoting platforms of reconciliation. In Kakuma Refugee Camp, a community sundered by tribal divisions, the church activated elements of inter-ethnic reconciliation. As one young man commented, ‘when we were in Sudan many people killed each other and in the Bible it is written not to kill... So as we came to Kenya as a refugee maybe God wants us to learn that... we should have peace and we should understand the problem of your neighbour.’⁴⁸³ Pastors reflexively served as models of healthy interaction through programmes of personal visitation and exchange during times of conflict,

⁴⁸² ‘Fundamentally, the manner in which refugees are portrayed bears importantly on policy decisions and framework for action... The characterization of dislocated peoples as helpless and needy leads to a very different set of policies and guidelines for intervention than one which emphasises refugees as resourceful and competent.’ Linda A. Camino, “Implications for Application,” in *Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning: Refugee Identity, Gender, and Culture Change*, eds. Linda A. Camino and Ruth M. Krulfeld (Basel: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994), 203-4.

⁴⁸³ John Kong, interview with author, 9 February 2006.

churches steadily advocated broadening communal identification and reciprocity and communicants organised community workshops on peace building. Although churches were not the only channel encouraging this development, in Kakuma they were predominant in advancing communal solidarity and new collective identification critical in the peaceful stabilisation of the camp.

Though to a lesser extent, in both Khartoum and Oligi churches were also involved in elements of reconciliation primarily in promoting resolution to intra-familial disputes and beneficial interaction with the local host population. As one refugee in Khartoum described:

The Bible rebukes us and also the Bible tells us to reconcile or to forgive others. For example this civil war has created deep hatred and the causes of war are from our brothers. As we know them now we can understand that forgiveness is the only way that people can live together. We have to forgive them for all what they did. As you have been to south I think you have seen much destruction that happened in south. This is from our brothers. And you read the Sudanese, the black people, are the people of this land. We are the real people of this land. And we are treated badly and all this but we should forgive them.⁴⁸⁴

In addition to reconciliation the churches produced a number of other communal benefits. These ranged from extended services such as education, orphanages and health care to congregational networks of support in the distribution of resources, information and spiritual livelihood. Particularly in Khartoum and Oligi churches often provided spiritual access and sanctity to key moments of life transition. Living among communities tattered and frayed churches were a critical beacon of inspiring hope that empowered refugees.⁴⁸⁵ Across the various refugee settings the ability of the churches to offer solidarity, rehabilitate networks of support, build peace and reconciliation, broaden otherwise limited physical services, promote hope and grant divine sacredness both substantially influenced communal stability positively and functioned as a significant rationale behind the numerical growth of southern identification with Christianity particularly post-1989.

There is a third and final overarching reason related to the growth of Christianity throughout southern Sudan: communally defined frameworks of interpretation. As the war intensified and communities were wrecked southern

⁴⁸⁴ Mary Joshua, member of ECS Hajj Yusuf, interview with author, 24 March 2006, Khartoum.

⁴⁸⁵ One scholar noted a similar function among southern Sudanese churches in the Egyptian refugee setting: 'churches acted as sources of hope, solace and inspiration.' Alew Damiano Bwolo, "Impact of the Churches' and NGOs' Activities on the Culture of the Sudanese Refugees in Egypt," a paper presented at the Sudan Cultural Digest Project Workshop on Culture, Conflict and Displaced Sudanese in Egypt at The American University in Cairo (Cairo: Unpublished, 1997), 51.

Sudanese increasingly searched for new venues of interaction and understanding to adapt to the war zone. Christianity is to a large extent significantly indigenised due to an initial scarcity of missionaries reinforced by the 1964 governmental decision expelling all missionaries.⁴⁸⁶ While retaining important elements of continuity, churches increasingly functioned as conduits that beneficially adapted and transitioned traditions into new frameworks of interpretation. For example Christianity provided in Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi an overarching vernacular and rationale for unity between southern ethnicities without significantly challenging or altering the existence and characteristics of those ethnicities outside of times of interaction. That is, Christianity allowed unity for southern Sudanese on the basis of a maintained diversity of tribes and denominations. The capacity of the church to balance limited maintenance of traditional continuity within a new framework of interpretation proved numerically strengthening and as it relates to ethnic interaction will be more fully explored in the following chapter.

Spiritually, Christianity's granting of new and unmediated access to God attracted a number of adherents dismayed at the perceived failure of traditional religious practices to stem the tide of war and offer meaningful protection. Sharon Hutchinson observed that among the Nuer, 'civilian youth and women of all ages were especially attracted to Christianity's promise of more direct relationship with God, unmediated by the rigid age and gender hierarchies characterizing indigenous sacrificial practices... Christianity encouraged hope in the protective powers of a compassionate and accessible God.'⁴⁸⁷ This new spiritual paradigm provided an alternate framework that proved especially powerful as it was primarily transmitted via traditionally formatted songs composed and heralded by indigenous itinerant evangelists often without the knowledge of even local clergy.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Early mission strategy frequently centred on equipping southern Sudanese evangelists 'who as a teacher could establish out-schools to train yet more Christians until they multiplied and carried the Christian message to the most remote corners of this vast land.' Jack Bermingham and Robert O. Collins, "The Thin White Line," in *The British in the Sudan, 1898-1956: The Sweetness and the Sorrow*, eds. Robert O. Collins and Francis M. Deng (London: Macmillan, 1984), 186. For a more contemporary missionary perspective on the indigenisation of the Sudanese church see the personal reflection of Andrew Wheeler, *Bombs, Ruins and Honey: Journeys of the Spirit with Sudanese Christians* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006). Though somewhat polemical see also Peter Hammond, *Faith Under Fire in Sudan* (Newlands: Frontline Fellowship, 1996).

⁴⁸⁷ Sharon Elaine Hutchinson, "Spiritual Fragments of an Unfinished War," in *Religion and African Civil Wars*, ed. Niels Kastfelt (London: Hurst and Company, 2005), 40.

⁴⁸⁸ Oliver Allison a former Sudanese Archbishop relays the following insightful story about the indigenous nature and potential of southern Sudanese songs: 'Dario had been faithfully preaching to

The ability of Christianity to function beneficially as a new framework of interpretation is perhaps most clearly expressed in a substantively shifted understanding of the meaning and purpose of the war as a tool of internal cleansing and calling. Many southern Sudanese perceive that God if not originating, at least utilised the war as a form of discipline on southern Sudanese for failing to maintain a right relationship with him. Importantly however the ultimate result of this divinely sanctioned suffering is purification, rehabilitation, blessing and victory.⁴⁸⁹ For southern Sudanese Isaiah 18 is one of the most frequently cited and important Biblical passages understood as a prophecy of destruction and renewal:

Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush,
which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water.
Go, swift messengers, to a people tall and smooth-skinned,
to a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers.
All you people of the world, you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains, you will see it,
and when a trumpet sounds, you will hear it.
This is what the Lord says to me:
“I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place”...
He will cut off the shoots with pruning knives,
And cut down and take away the spreading branches.
They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals;
The birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter.
At that time gifts will be brought to the Lord Almighty
from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers –
the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion,

people in the forest but deep down his heart was not right. Then one evening he was bitten by a deadly snake and very shortly he fell unconscious to the ground... During his period of unconsciousness he had a vivid dream. In the vision two people came to him and one of them said, “Read this passage”; the other said, “No, don’t just read it – sing it”... Later he recovered and discovered that many people had been surrounding him with prayer. He then sang to them one of the songs that was still ringing in his ears and they all responded. This was the beginning of a number of songs based on the parables of Jesus and on the apocalyptic references in the Gospels to the times of trouble and the expectation of the Lord’s return.’ Oliver Allison, *Through Fire and Water* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1976), 52-3.

⁴⁸⁹ For a more complete overview of this theological development from a southern Sudanese perspective see Isaiah Majok Dau, *Suffering and God: A Theological Reflection on the War in Sudan* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 61-72.

the place of the Name of the Lord Almighty.⁴⁹⁰

As one southern Sudanese pastor stated, ‘maybe what God mentioned in the Old Testament is reality because God mentioned one thing, the corpse, and you know the corpse, the body of these soldiers, the bird would eat them and the sun will see them and the animal will kiss them. And this is what happened... We encouraged them because of this.’⁴⁹¹

For many displaced southern Sudanese Christians the geographical land of southern Sudan has been infused with mystical qualities symbolising freedom, provision and restoration. It is a ‘promised land’ with Biblical connotations, divinely decreed to southern Sudanese, secured upon the restoration of a proper relationship with God now centred in Christianity and church affiliation. One individual in Kakuma stated, ‘we cannot blame God as to why we came to Kenya as refugees. No we cannot do that because maybe the time when we were in Sudan we did bad things and now God changes us from those bad things to good things.’⁴⁹² Another explained, ‘we have Isaiah 18, which is the reference to what we are doing in Sudan. As he said the God will call his people from Sudan... and when they go back to their country later on they will be the gift of God to thank God for what they have learned and what God has [taught] them during the crisis.’⁴⁹³ Responding to why he believed the peace came one displaced southerner in Hajj Yusuf said he would ‘refer us back to Isaiah 18 which says that the Sudan will be punished... Every community was praying for the peace to come and now the peace has come.’⁴⁹⁴ Replying to a similar question Richard Thomas, a vicar in Yambio observed, ‘what I see is within all this war and peace has come that it is really, I can just can say, that it is God’s work. God is trying to change this south Sudan into another form.’⁴⁹⁵ Widespread the belief that God has divinely chosen south Sudan to experience significant blessing on the condition of large scale turning to the church has fuelled a mass conversion of southerners seeking a new framework of interpreting the war and locating meaning

⁴⁹⁰ Isaiah 18 NIV. Southern Sudanese understood the aggressive ‘people tall and smooth-skinned’ to refer to themselves, especially the Dinka and Nuer who are renown for their tall height.

⁴⁹¹ David Ibon, pastor of PCOS, interview with author, 17 January 2006, Nairobi.

⁴⁹² John Kong, interview with author, 9 February 2006.

⁴⁹³ Phillip Makueol, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

⁴⁹⁴ Peter Kai Thon, interview with author, 22 March 2006.

⁴⁹⁵ Richard Thomas, vicar of All Saints Cathedral, Yambio, interview with author, 9 March 2006, Yambio.

in the midst of suffering. Many would echo the sentiment of one young man in Oliji Refugee Camp, ‘the Israeli people they never accepted God but when they came later to accept the word of God then they returned to their place. And now at this time peace also came to our land there because now people realise that they really understand or they agree with the word of God and that prayer helps the peace to come.’⁴⁹⁶

The result of this change in interpretation is the further empowering of displaced southern Sudanese in three important ways. First, focus on divine intervention on the basis of southern realignment preserves a measure of control for many southerners. As was borne out during field research what one ‘almost never finds is a confession of ignorance about the answer to some question which the people themselves consider important.’⁴⁹⁷ That is when queried about the origin of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the details of which are not widely distributed, it is likely that some respondents attributed the origin to God rather than admitting a lack of knowledge to an outside observer thereby relinquishing control. At a social level, concentration on the need for action by southerners themselves undermines a narrative of Islamic control. It shifts the paradigm of reference away from negative response to external threat to an internal reaction of positive development. In many ways it actually bypasses the need to understand, respond or build bridges to the Islamic discourse as northerners are subverted to a tool of functionality in the hands of God. For many southern Sudanese, interpretations of the war centre on dialogue within the southern community and between God rather than a narrative of Islamic-Christian conflict.⁴⁹⁸ This shift in understanding is clearly articulated in one of the most popular songs of the 1990s written by Mary Alueel Ngongdit Garang:

“Let Us Give Thanks”

1) Let us give thanks;

⁴⁹⁶ Eremugo Alfred, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁴⁹⁷ Robin Horton, *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 243.

⁴⁹⁸ There is a long history of southern Sudanese utilising war as a means to adapt southern religiosity in a manner that affirms the primacy and efficaciousness of that religiosity, undermines the Islamic discourse emanating from the north and to a limited extent, divorces northern aggression from Islamic ideology. For example during the Mahdiyya ‘the Dinka were able to incorporate into their own experience the names and figures central to Sudanese Muslim belief and practice, but divorcing them from any Islamic connotations, associations or meaning.’ Douglas H. Johnson, “Prophecy and Mahdism in the Upper Nile: An Examination of Local Experiences of the Mahdiyya in the Southern Sudan,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (1993): 52.

let us give thanks to the Lord
in the day of devastation;
and in the day of contentment....
When we beseech the Lord
and unite our hearts and have hope,
then the *jok* has no power.⁴⁹⁹
God has not forgotten us.
Evil is departing and holiness is advancing,
these are the things that shake the Earth.

*Chorus: Do not look back; we are the people
who have received the life of Christ.
Let us show forth the light
of the Son of God.
Do what you are able to do
according to the gift which has been given you.*

5) It is not that God does not have power to deliver us,
but we had to endure our punishment because of our foolishness
because of our foolishness
of worshipping wood and animals.
So God thrashed out sin
from within mankind
and then he called us
to come with purity into his presence.
Salvation has come;
jok is departing with its hands tight to its sides.
Let us be strong,
God wants to visit the earth.⁵⁰⁰

Second, emphasis on Christian participation in the emergence of peace allows greater access to individual and communal contribution. In a context demanding support for the liberation movement headed by the SPLA, prayers and directed worship are understood as one potential tool in the fight for freedom. Participation in

⁴⁹⁹ *Jok* refers to evil spirits.

⁵⁰⁰ Marc R. Nikkel, ““Look Back Upon Us.” The Dynamism of Faith Among the Jieng,” in “*But God is Not Defeated!*” *Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 157-8.

Christian religiosity offers space for the development of a semblance of identification and contribution to the broader effort otherwise restricted for many displaced southerners.

Third, as a framework for understanding, this shift enables refugees to locate their suffering and disintegration in the midst of broader meaning and purpose. Belief in an ancient prophecy of divine selection bringing sustainable peace after a limited period of suffering points to a valuable rationale in what is for many an otherwise incomprehensible war of anguish and attrition. As Broch-Due affirms, ‘in many warsapes religion plays an important role precisely because of the desire to situate horrific material events in a cosmological framework that renders them meaningful.’⁵⁰¹ Powerful symbols such as the cross and a vibrant theology of cosmological meaning and ordering allow the church to function, therefore, as a social sanctuary of regeneration and hope.

Christianity has grown among southern Sudanese with rapid alacrity. Although exact numerical quantification is beyond the scope of the thesis, remaining an important area for future exploration, available research indicates that sixty to seventy percent of all southern Sudanese would self-identify with Christianity. This development reflects a dramatic increase from around ten to twenty percent prior to 1989. It is unsurprising that many southern Sudanese Christians will claim even higher percentages of growth as individual numerical growth gave way to broad social identification wherein ‘group beliefs are usually held with great confidence because they are considered to be facts and verities. This occurs because group beliefs define the essence of the group and thus the reality of the individuals who view themselves as group members.’⁵⁰² Christianity grew for a number of rationales summarised as a tool of resistance to external forces, a source of numerous significant communal benefits to local settings and as a facilitator of empowering frameworks of war interpretation. Reflecting on the explosive growth of Christianity one southern Sudanese scholar noted:

The Church has become a new community capable of absorbing that suffering. It is trying to provide encouragement, protection, refuge, healing and hope for the victims of the war. In the difficult realities of war and its extensive destruction, the church with its meagre

⁵⁰¹ Vigdis Broch-Due, “Violence and Belonging: Analytical Reflections,” 33-4.

⁵⁰² Daniel Bar-Tal, “Group Beliefs as an Expression of Social Identity,” in *Social Identity: International Perspectives*, eds. Stephen Worchel, J. Francisco Morales, Dario Paez and Jean-Claude Deschamps (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 101.

resources, tries to feed the hungry, nurse the wounded, clothe the naked, educate the illiterate, defend the defenceless and speak for the voiceless and the marginalised. For many people, the church has now become what it never was in the past.⁵⁰³

Convergence of Three Camps: Kakuma, Hajj Yusuf and Olijj

Geographically separated by hundreds of miles and varying cultures each of the three camps represent a current of interaction that exists within southern Sudan along a continuum of war, social stability and peace building as is charted in Appendix One. Within Kakuma Refugee Camp, despite a number of substantial difficulties, in recent years the camp itself has been spared major influxes or external threats. The predominant challenge has been internal conflict generated between southern Sudanese on the basis of tribal and ethnic affiliation. In this context churches have largely succeeded in helping establish communal peace, reconciliation and stability with a strong social identification with Christianity. Most associated with leading elders and men churches have been at the ‘forefront’ of shaping cultural responses and reformation.

Among the displaced in Hajj Yusuf, Khartoum ethnic conflict was present only to a limited degree. The predominant threat to security and healthy interaction was an external imposition of discrimination, segregation and exclusion imposed by the dominant Riverine Arabic host population. Forced to the margins and alienated from southern Sudan to a greater extent than the other two settings, individuals grappled with endeavours to establish an Islamic agenda of purity at their expense.



Figure 21 – ECS Church, Hajj Yusuf

Increasingly the community turned to the churches for a bestowal of divine sanctity in key transitions and for guidance and advice in establishing beneficial patterns of interaction within an unaltered culture. Linked symbolically with youth churches became

⁵⁰³ Isaiah Majok Dau, *Suffering and God*, 59.

‘culturally central,’ functioning as cultural custodians with significant influence and impact on southern communal stability in a context demanding adaptation.

Refugees in Olori Refugee Camp were subjected to a high density of warfare that forced multiple occasions of displacement and intense fragmentation. External threats from the Government of Sudan, the LRA and the SPLA fused into a single force continuously psychologically undermining the majority of the refugees. Though churches were able to resolve a number of familial disputes, increase communal solidarity on the basis of shared suffering and contribute to a meagre but critical measure of hope, at a popular level the churches were correlated most commonly with women and an influence best understood as low or ‘falling behind.’

Each of these three case studies represents responses found throughout southern Sudan to both the war and the establishment of Christian influence. That is, taken as a whole a composite picture develops of the impact of Christianity on southern Sudan during the second civil war: an internal agency of significant impact at the forefront of shaping southern perspectives on inter-tribal relations, trusted and turned towards as a centre for divine blessing and practical aid that only to a lesser extent actually altered practices of worship at a personal and familial level. While the influence of Christianity is significant on southern Sudan as a whole it is limited and even problematic in several key ways.

First, although church leadership and methods of evangelism have been largely indigenised, important areas of theology lag behind. This is perhaps most important in the area of individual social equality. While churches have been vocal in promoting reciprocity between southern tribes they have been less intentional and adamant about translating equality into the contextual life and practice of the church, especially in relation to women. The following excerpt from a sermon by a pastor in Juba is revealing:

Who can deny that there is corruption and violence here, especially in Juba town? And silence means acceptance. During the International Day of Women [four days ago] the women complained that the men were treating them as second class and violating their human rights. And on this day the men were supposed to be in the kitchen so the women could go to the celebration. But some women just cooked the food for their husbands and fed them before they went to the celebration because this is how the traditional culture and laws of our culture are. It is impossible for men to be in the kitchen. This is the role of the women. So if the men do this they are violating the role of women. They are fighting the human rights of women. [Laughter and agreement by men.] And even the Bible supports this because the Bible talks about gender balance and roles. The woman is to support her husband and the husband is to take care of everything. Today there are many things coming trying to violate and corrupt our character, to violate our culture. And so we must examine these things against the local laws and the Bible and not allow these things to corrupt us.

Today Juba town is like Jerusalem and Jesus Christ is weeping. What is happening in Juba today is beyond evil... So our town is going to be destroyed and Jesus Christ is weeping. If we are not careful then our town will be destroyed.⁵⁰⁴

The above passage highlights the ability of many leading church elders to actually co-opt the language of human rights and equality in a manner that subverts the status of women. Organisations such as the ECS' Mother's Union offer limited leadership exposure and some church leaders with international contact have at least begun to recognise the importance of supporting the rights of women.⁵⁰⁵ However these endeavours remain extremely limited in scope and influence. For example among the churches in Hajj Yusuf and Olijj there were no clear examples of efforts to increase gender equality and as an issue, it was raised in none of the interviews and focus groups.⁵⁰⁶

Related to the above one of the most significant areas of needed ongoing theological reflection is the area of marriage and family as war has considerably strained many traditional forms of socially approved relationships. In an environment of substantively increased widows and high mortality church teaching has further eroded support for many practices engineered to encourage communal care, responsibility and solidarity. By categorically emphasising monogamy without reflexively establishing other venues of social care for women and children many local church leaders are indirectly loosening ethical bonds of common kinship that once defined communities. To a certain extent, Christianity is contributing to the loosening of individual social mores.

⁵⁰⁴ Justin Kongor, lay reader ECS and Deputy Director of Forestry Plans and Extensions in the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of South Sudan, recorded by author, 12 March 2006, Juba.

⁵⁰⁵ Mother's Union in Sudan dates back to the 1930s among the Zande tribe. Lona Lowilla and Jenny Siama Paul, "Arise and Shine!" Girls' Education and the Ministry of Women in the Episcopal Church of the Sudan," in *"But God is Not Defeated!" Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 117-30. Importantly however, it was not until Elizabeta William, a southern Sudanese married to an ECS lay reader in the Sudan Defence Force began forming Mother's Union among soldier's wives in barracks that the institution began to spread throughout southern Sudan. Samuel E. Kayanga, "A Vision of "Family": Elizabeta William and Early Women's Ministry Amongst the Moru," in *Announcing the Light: Sudanese Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 108-15. Though very limited, for one of the few efforts to specifically emphasise the perspective of women interacting with the war and peace process at a grassroots level see Lillian Craig Harris, *Keeping the Faith: Travels with Sudanese Women* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999).

⁵⁰⁶ Although an effort was made to allow categories and perspectives to organically develop during interview and focus group sessions, 'all research is born into and develops within a web of social and political relationships.' Rachel Baker and Rachel Hinton, "Do Focus Groups Facilitate Meaningful Participation in Social Research?," in *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, eds. Rosaline S. Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 80.

As was particularly emphasised in Chapter Two, though borne out during research in Khartoum and Oliji and indicated by the preceding discussion on gender equality, there is a tendency for church leaders to emulate traditional patterns of organisation, power and control. Although in a refugee context this imitation may prove helpful in establishing levels of continuity and stability, there are important long-term negative implications with the maintenance of predominately male oriented hierarchies. The centrality of male dominion even when individual women are given roles of leadership was clearly evidenced during a meal following one SPC worship service in Oliji. As the meal was served men and women divided into separate areas of consumption with one notable exception. Evangelist Victoria Bulsa, an individual described as ‘powerful’ in spirit was the sole woman to eat and freely interact with the gathered men. Church leaders should more theologically assess standard church seating arrangements, organisation and hierarchies in order to promote greater social equality among constituents.

This lack of theological development is rooted in part in the rapid expansion of Christianity. As Andrew Wheeler noted, ‘the Church in Sudan has not been formed by missionary endeavour and proclamation, but by rural evangelists with minimal education (in the western sense of that word) preaching an inculturated message conveyed in a vernacular language rooted in vernacular translations of portions of the Bible.’⁵⁰⁷ Unguided and often unrecognised the growth of Christianity in southern Sudan is a journey of evangelists carrying a message adapted to local institutions threatened by a traumatising war. Though the endeavours of these individuals to promote social identification and interpretations of hope in the midst of destabilisation are laudable, it remains unclear that corresponding official training institutions emphasise responsible theological reflection and assimilation.⁵⁰⁸

Though largely beyond the scope of the thesis it is important to also note that for many southern Sudanese private individual worship is highly fluid. While church influence has helped create space and ease in discussing and transitioning inter-tribal

⁵⁰⁷ Andrew C. Wheeler, “‘A Church of the People.’ The Role of Sudanese Evangelists,” in *Announcing the Light: Sudanese Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 62.

⁵⁰⁸ For an example of a brief southern Sudanese theological reflection on Sudanese evangelisation strategies with a call for increased reflection by a leading member of the PCOS see Matthew M. Deang, *Missiological Strategies for Evangelisation of the Sudan* (Nairobi: Sudan Literature Centre, 2005), 71-80.

southern relations within the public sphere by an encouragement of communal Christian identification, influence within the private sphere remains limited. At a grassroots level Christian teaching may actually loosen inter-personal bonds while simultaneously encouraging a generic and less meaningful overlay of public and political unity. In south Sudan, therefore, the greatest impact of the church is primarily at a political and social level as was demonstrated in the three specific refugee camps of Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi.

In terms of theological expression and emphasis, churches tended to reflect their local context rather than their denominational affiliation. For example an ECS congregation in Kakuma Refugee Camp displayed a closer similarity to PCOS constituents in Kakuma than to other ECS churches in Hajj Yusuf or Oligi. This does not imply that there are not certain characteristics common to churches in a denomination. ECS congregations tend to emphasise a symbolism of the cross and themes of suffering. SPC members in general articulate Biblical passages more frequently and fluidly. However themes and practices related to the local context were highlighted as predominant by the participants themselves. In addition to reflecting the limited theological development of official denominational education, it also demonstrates the ability of the various churches to remain close to grassroots concerns and developments shaped within the more practical sphere of local setting.

Theologically, one specific theme tied all of the denominations in all three of the examined locations, Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi: robust evangelisation. Consistently maintained during all of the various interviews and focus groups was a legitimate concern centred on the need for personal salvation in Christ. All of the churches, from Catholic to Pentecostal, tend towards a conservative evangelicalism that embraces personal repentance and piety as well as a literalist reading of the Scriptures.⁵⁰⁹ Other themes that emerged as shared emphasis between the camps were value based: apocalyptic victory, hope, the sacredness of southern Sudanese land, divine selection and adaptation. These themes point to a performative value rather than a strictly theological value. That is these themes are deeply rooted grassroots concerns of healing, holism and limited social progressivism that seeks empowerment to overcome the daily struggles of lives caught in a destabilising war.

⁵⁰⁹ Southern Sudanese approaches to Biblical interpretation tend towards what Philip Jenkins terms an 'Old Testament orientation,' Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 42-67.

In addition to problems associated with limited theological development, especially in relation to issues of individual social equality, a second problematic area for southern Sudanese churches has been fragmentation and upheaval particularly within structured denominational leadership. The most chronicled example is a split that occurred in the Episcopal Church of Sudan from 1986 to 1992 over a disputed election of a new Archbishop that ended in reconciliation shortly after the death of one of two contenders for the episcopate. Resolution was stymied as the church was ‘full of tribal tension’ affiliated around support for leadership chosen accordingly.⁵¹⁰ The ECS is not alone in struggles in this arena. In fact many respondents in the PCOS, particularly in Kakuma, automatically equated the tribal demarcation Nuer with PCOS membership. In 1994 the Governor of Upper Nile helped arrange a replacement of the leadership of PCOS-Malakal, a ‘kind of take over by force,’ that also involved pastors related to the Governor.⁵¹¹ Thomas Melut, then Secretary for Mission and Evangelism lost his job during this process because as he later claimed, ‘when there is war people of course do not think the same as when there is no war. There was some trauma you see in the minds even of the leadership of the people of the church because of these troubles.’⁵¹²

In 2000 the Sudan Pentecostal Church-North also experienced internal conflict on the basis of financial control as relayed by Fermo Ogilla who was at the time the Acting Overseer:

All the churches are experiencing some kind of internal conflicts, tribal, political within the church. Actually it has happened in Pentecostal Church, it has happened in Presbyterian Church, it has happened with the African Inland Church, it has happened in Sudanese Church of Christ and I think also it could be behind the reason why there has been a slide... Yeah, it has happened in the Pentecostal Church. Actually it almost broke the church but by the grace of God the church did not split... It started with my wife was sick, she was sick with some kind, she has some mental problems. And actually I did not like to be a General Overseer for that reason but when our former General Overseer decided that he would not contest the election he wanted to go, I mean he wanted to go for further studies then I was forced to come in because I was only the next person. But later on some of my colleagues used that, I mean my wife’s sickness, I mean it was more or less like a coup d’état. But behind it was the misuse of money... The money that was meant for projects and relief and so these colleagues

⁵¹⁰ Samuel E. Kayanga, “Faith, Integrity and Freedom: Elinana Jabi Ngalamu (1917-1992),” in *Announcing the Light: Sudanese Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 246; see also Samuel Kayanga and Abe Enosa, “The Miracle of Reconciliation in the ECS, Juba, 1 November 1992,” in “*“But God is Not Defeated!” Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 159-64.

⁵¹¹ Thomas Melut, interview with author, 16 March 2006.

⁵¹² Ibid.

had been using the money... They thought that I was too strict and so the best way for them was to find that there was a misuse. I said people this problem with my wife is not new, during election it was there... But finally it came out very clearly the money was not used as it was prescribed.⁵¹³

Though churches at both a grassroots and denominational level have promoted unity, reconciliation and good governance they have at times themselves been sites of competition and corruption. Tribal politicisation compounded by access to foreign cash flow and opportunities for advancement has caused conflict and setback. The SCC itself recently underwent significant purging with all two hundred staff members released after accusations that leading members of the Council misappropriated money during the SCC response to Darfur.⁵¹⁴ Despite these problems related to the internal application of individual social equality and struggles with denominational schism, churches, as was demonstrated in Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi, have significantly and positively impacted the development of communal stability and reconciliation. In all three settings churches recreated social networks, granted access to divine sacredness during birth, marriage and burial ceremonies, encouraged resolution to communal disputes, extended practical advice in the search for economic alternatives, provided social services such as schools, libraries and health care and were a repository for communal symbols of peace, victory, meaning and hope. The churches therefore facilitated convergence along the road to peace and generated a loose national identification with Christianity.

National Convergence: Indications of Civil Religion

Sipping steaming tea in small clear glasses in the back office of All Saints Cathedral, Khartoum on a hot March afternoon Canon Sylvester Thomas relayed the results of his most recent visit to Juba, capital of the Government of Southern Sudan: initial approval for the construction of a 'Centre for Reconciliation and Forgiveness.'⁵¹⁵ The focal point of the Centre would be a specially constructed ECS cathedral built around the tomb of John Garang and connected by hallway to the

⁵¹³ Fermo Ogilla, interview with author, 18 March 2006.

⁵¹⁴ Willow Gbolo Yerumba, Personnel Secretary for SCC, interview with author, 21 March 2006, Khartoum. Occurring in 2005, several of the staff members were rehired in preparation for the eventual SCC-NSCC merger.

⁵¹⁵ The following is based on Sylvester Thomas, interview with author, 3 March 2007.

Parliament of the Government of Southern Sudan. Surrounding the chapel would be a cafeteria, Internet café, lecture rooms and a library comprised of two sections, one dedicated to reconciliation and forgiveness and another to good governance. After viewing some of the initial sketches generated by an architect Thomas stated that the overall visual effect was a marked similarity to Washington D.C., with a new national chapel, the tomb of Garang, analogous to the Lincoln Monument, and Parliament arranged along a spatial line. James Wani Igga, the Speaker of the Parliament for Southern Sudan, Rebekah Garang, a Member of the Parliament and wife of late Colonel John Garang, and Salva Kiir, President of South Sudan were all briefed by Thomas who was commissioned to continue exploring the possibility of this new Centre commemorating the legacy of John Garang in an architectural bridge between the Government of Southern Sudan and Christianity.

Richard Pierard and Robert Linder define civil religion according to five prominent characteristics:

First, it will refer to the widespread acceptance by a people of a shared sense of their nation's history and destiny. Second, it will relate their society to a realm of absolute meaning. Third, it will enable them to look at their society and community as in some sense special. Fourth, it will provide a vision which ties the nation together as an integrated whole. And fifth, it will provide a collection of beliefs, values, rites, ceremonies and symbols which, taken together, give sacred meaning to the life of the community and thus provide an overarching sense of unity that transcends internal conflicts and differences.⁵¹⁶

Among southern Sudanese Christianity satisfies a number of these prerequisites. Isaiah 18, symbolism of the cross and the consistent intermingling of themes related to Christianity, the war and south Sudan point to a widespread acceptance of an interpretation that posits south Sudan within a sphere of divine meaning and predetermined destiny of blessed sanctity. This was clearly seen in the ECS centennial celebration in Kakuma Refugee Camp and the double symbolism of the participants' uniforms – red for the blood of Christ and the blood of southerners who died during the war, white for the Holy Spirit and the coming of peace, tied together with a black belt representing the geographical land of the south, completed with a green hat signifying both heaven and the green grass of assured growth in southern Sudan.⁵¹⁷ Furthermore in all three of the examined locations Christianity was exhibiting a previously unknown prominence in the performative rites of death

⁵¹⁶ Richard Pierard and Robert Linder, *Civil Religion and the Presidency* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 22-3. See also Richard V. Pierard, "Civil Religion," in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, 1999.

⁵¹⁷ See page 52.

and burial ceremonies increasing sacredness, hope, meaning and unified solidarity among the communities. Finally as was demonstrated at the local level of Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi, and as will be expounded at the national level in the following chapters, Christianity offered an overarching paradigm for unity transcending internal southern tribal and ethnic conflicts.

It is important to note that Christian moulded civil religion within southern Sudan remains at a stage of early development. It is most likely not yet categorically ascertainable in every context nor is it certain to continue in this trajectory though several key markers are present. First, civil religion often emerges from times of



Figure 22 – All Saints Cathedral, Juba

national war.⁵¹⁸ The establishment of national monuments and institutions of remembrance, such as that being currently explored by the leaders of the Government of Southern Sudan and Canon Thomas of the ECS, will help influence the prominence of collective honouring and moral obligation. Should southern Sudan vote independence in the scheduled referendum the initiated national pledges and anthem will further clarify the scope of this development.

Second, civil religion differs from state religion. In the context of southern Sudan Christianity is amenable towards other religious traditions, particularly African Traditional Religion. Furthermore, Christianity is not compulsory and is unlikely to be imposed as a state religion in south Sudan. In an interview with James Wani Igga, Speaker of the Parliament for Southern Sudan, he insisted that while separation between church and state would officially be ‘strict,’ churches had an extensive civil service network that for the foreseeable future would be relied on for the provision of communal services such as education and healthcare.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ Often those who die in war are honoured with ‘rituals of remembrance’ connected ‘to the establishment of sacred places and memorials’ that ‘impose a debt of remembrance on the living – and also a moral obligation on the living to continue to uphold the values and the commitment.’ Gerald Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 42.

⁵¹⁹ James Wani Igga, Speaker of the Parliament of the Government of South Sudan, interview with author, 12 March 2006, Juba.

Though southern Sudanese civil religion is most frequently articulated in Christian terminology and vernacular it is not singularly Christian in its content. Rather Christianity has capitalised on pre-existing tenets of reconciliation and peace building traditionally upheld by the leading religious practitioners with the broadest inter-communal legitimacy.⁵²⁰ That is the Christianity expressed by numerous individuals throughout Kakuma, Khartoum, Oligi and southern Sudan point towards a set of values, interpretations and impulses within the public sphere rather than at the level of individual practice. This Christian influenced civil religion does not reflect a mandated social identification but a loose and stabilising force ecumenically advanced across the denominations influencing the development of an ethical paradigm of united solidarity and consciousness.⁵²¹

A third marker pointing to the securing of a Christian influenced civil religion will be the establishment of a successful and beneficial southern Sudanese government. Interpretations of Isaiah 18 depend upon the eventual creation of a state of shared dividends. Should 'the eschatological promises of development and material prosperity slip away, so too may the edifice of the national faith begin to crumble.'⁵²² That is the final conferring of legitimacy will be based on economic development and democratic good governance. This area is potentially the most problematic in terms of analysing the long-term prospects of a robust civil religion as there are already mixed indications regarding the transparency of the Government of Southern Sudan.⁵²³

⁵²⁰ As the current predominant majority religion at a group social level in south Sudan Christianity maintains a traditional approach to religion where 'the emphasis on group membership is particularly strong in any situation in which the spirit world is, or could conceivably be involved.' B. A. Lewis, *The Murle: Red Chiefs and Black Commoners* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), 127.

⁵²¹ In complete social identification 'people categorize and define themselves as members of a distinct social category or assign themselves a social identity; second, they form or learn the stereotype norms of that category; and third, they assign these norms to themselves and thus their behaviour becomes more normative as their category membership becomes salient.' Michael A. Hogg and Craig McGarthy, "Self-Categorization and Social Identity," in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 15.

⁵²² Rosalind I. J. Hackett and Jacob Kehinde Olupona, "Civil Religion," in *Religion and Society in Nigeria: Historical and Sociological Perspectives*, eds. Jacob K. Olupona and Toyin Falola (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1991), 277.

⁵²³ Accusations of corruption against the Government of South Sudan primarily related to the dispensing of oil revenue have been levelled. In December 2006 this led to a small mutiny by a group of soldiers at the military barracks at Gumba just outside Juba over unpaid salaries. "Gunfire Rocks Juba as Sudan Soldiers Mutiny," *The Monitor*, 16 December 2006, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 27 December 2006. Salva Kiir has acknowledged the difficulties facing the

While acknowledging important limitations it is possible to discern the beginning stages of a Christian civil religion in southern Sudan most clearly evidenced in the fusion between Christian religious leaders and elected representatives. In Kakuma Refugee Camp the leader of the Nuer community is also the Baptist pastor. Alanya Joseph, the leader of the Equatorian community in Kakuma is also a member of the leadership team at the Seventh Day Adventist Church stating, ‘now if you want to be a good leader what are you supposed to be? You can read thoroughly in the Bible and it can give you all the guidelines.’⁵²⁴ The Welfare Refugee Chairman over Olij Refugee Camp is also a preacher in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. The Governor of the State of Western Equatoria informally consults Father Joseph Garzi, Catholic Bishop of Yambio and Tambura, about upcoming legislation.⁵²⁵ There are numerous pastors in the Government of South Sudan and Salva Kiir, President of South Sudan, is a faithful communicant in the Catholic Church and widely considered supportive of the NSCC and the churches it represents.

In addition there is a preponderance of Christian language in public proclamations and official gatherings as was clearly evidenced at the International Day of Women in Western Equatoria described at the beginning of the chapter. In Kakuma Refugee Camp, where a form of Christian civil religion has grown strongest, one individual elaborated, ‘in any committee formed whether in the government or within the camp here you get a representative from the church within that committee, to do what, to open with the word of prayers. And maybe if there is a meeting they must call the pastor first of all to open for them... It is one of the links between church and the government.’⁵²⁶ Christianity is developing an important influence behind the scenes in a way that is neither institutionalised or controlled but present and efficacious all the same. Though writing in a different context Kenneth Wald’s words could well be applied to southern Sudan:

At the core of the rich and subtle concept of civil religion is the idea that a nation tries to understand its historical experience and national purpose in religious terms... civil religion

fledgling government and has arrested and removed immunity from members of the cabinet suspected of corruption. “South Sudan Minister Arrested Over Fraud,” *East African Business Week*, 26 March 2007, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 26 March 2007.

⁵²⁴ Alanya Joseph, interview with author, 14 February 2006.

⁵²⁵ Minister of Finance, State of Western Equatoria, interview with author, 10 March 2006, Yambio.

⁵²⁶ Phillip Makueol, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

reflects [an] attempt by citizens to imbue their nation with a transcendent value. The nation is recognized as a secular institution, yet one that is somehow touched by the hand of God.⁵²⁷

The converging of civil religion and Christianity within the political sphere is clearly and intimately tied to the dominance of a destabilising and devastating war. This connection between war and Christianity is not new within southern Sudan. In 1971 Joseph Lagu, the leading southern rebel, captured twenty-nine northern civilians in a crashed airplane fourteen days after government forces attacked a rebel village that included burning down a church with worshippers inside. Upon their capture Lagu asked himself, 'what would Christ have me to do?'⁵²⁸ Contrary to popular assumption Lagu released the civilians as a symbol of generosity thereby undermining the Sudanese government's accusations about him and the rebels. Shortly thereafter the World Council of Churches and the All African Conference of Churches initiated and brokered a peace agreement that ended the first civil war.

This intimate connection was maintained during the recent civil war. Churches at the grassroots were clearly affected by the war and offered consistent if sometimes meagre attempts to shape and influence the horrendous conflict in their midst. On four separate occasions PCOS churches in Hajj Yusuf collected, transported and distributed clothing and shoes to destabilised areas in southern Sudan.⁵²⁹ In 2000 churches in Kakuma collected clothing, blankets and even money and 'these things were given to the soldiers deployed in Eastern Equatoria.'⁵³⁰ One church leader in Yambio reflected, 'we announced to the people bring food to the church so that we can give it to our soldiers.... If this New Sudan Council of Churches had some aid coming to the churches, churches can give certain percentage to the government and certain percentage to the Christians.'⁵³¹

The bond between war and Christianity extended to Biblical interpretations and even the perceived basic purpose of the Bible itself. One man in Olji asserted, 'the Bible also is a spear to fight against the Satan,'⁵³² and another in Kakuma

⁵²⁷ Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Washington: CO Press, 1997), 59-60.

⁵²⁸ Douglas Johnston, "Looking Ahead: Toward a New Paradigm," in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 318.

⁵²⁹ Isaac Cham Jwok and Gordon Awetch, interview with author, 20 March 2006.

⁵³⁰ James Ateny Lual, interview with author, 10 February 2006.

⁵³¹ Richard Thomas, interview with author, 9 March 2006.

⁵³² David Oleca, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

avowed repeatedly that the cross is ‘the gun’ of the south, ‘the gun’ of the south.⁵³³ Chaplains and church leaders travelled with soldiers ministering to their needs, challenging their atrocities, grieving in their losses and blessing their combat. Two church leaders who travelled with a company of soldiers explained:

Peter Kai: We can pray first when they go to war... They [the SPLA soldiers] say, “church, church, church.” They call to God.

Peter Lual: They use a slogan something like this, they say, “church.” They used to go to war they just say, “church, church, church.”

Author: So when the soldiers would go out to fight they would all be saying, “church, church, church?”

Peter Kai and Peter Lual together: “Church, church, church.”

...

Peter Kai: Moses when he was with the people of God, they put God in front of them, the word in front of them, and they pray the word of God and they go to fight people. And you [the pastor] can do like that. And you give them [the soldiers] encouragement, encouragement to be strong. When they go to fight, they say that if it is God, it is not him alone, he will be with God if he goes to fight them.⁵³⁴

While one individual stated that there was no Christian influence or presence among the men he commanded,⁵³⁵ another claimed that he instructed the men under his direction to take their guns and use them to make the sign of the cross in the air before running into the battle’s fray.⁵³⁶ It is impossible to analyse the growth of Christianity without understanding the impact of the war. Likewise, it is impossible to understand the development of peace without analysing the influence of Christianity. Christianity and the war functioned as mutually reinforcing prisms that refracted and refined the other. In the midst of a destabilising war Christianity converged as the primary interlocutor with individual, communal and national permutations. The convergence of a civil religion built upon the sacredness of the land, the war and Christianity is clearly expressed in the following hymn composed by a young man in 1988 on the basis of Matthew 2:1-2:

God, Jehovah, here, take the land,
and lead the land
Jok has no power to lead us

⁵³³ John Achol, member of ECS, interview with author, 13 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

⁵³⁴ Peter Kai Nyon and Peter Lual, pastors of PCOS, interview with author, 6 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

⁵³⁵ James Rout Wour, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

⁵³⁶ John Riak, evangelist and church secretary PCOS, interview with author, 12 February 2006, Kakuma Refugee Camp.

You will lead our land, Jehovah,
 together with John [Garang] so that we taste freedom.
 We are suffering double slavery
 We are enslaved by *jok*,
 and enslaved by man as well.
 The power of the SPLA, *Wa yiyeei!* [X2]
 Raise up your left hand!

 Victory will be with the left hand!
 Bible on the right!
 The place of the *jok* will be no more.
 The two great points of strength
 will give us respite.⁵³⁷

Whereas each of the refugee settings of Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi demonstrate the impact of the church at a local grassroots context, taken together they form a composite picture of an overarching impact of the church on southern Sudan as a whole. Growing out of a grassroots analysis collectively churches: recreated traditional Sudanese society, built peace between southern ethnicities, modelled social initiatives, offered to the community cultural and practical sacredness, centralised political resistance, encouraged community unification and posited a secure hope. Though all of these impacts are not significantly demonstrated in each individual setting, all are present at least implicitly and at the national level form explicit threads that empowered the church to function as a primary agent on the road to peace. Each refugee setting reflects select components and rationales behind a national movement with significant reverberations deposited in the locus of the New Sudan Council of Churches. The NSCC therefore, functioned at the forefront of establishing reconciliation and peace building between southern ethnicities, resonated from within as a cultural custodian that centrally provided pressure on the SPLA and carefully positioned itself as a substantive force behind the scenes lobbying and pushing from behind Sudanese, regional and international political agencies in the brokerage of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The remainder of the thesis will focus on the mediatory process carried

⁵³⁷ Marc R. Nikkel, "The Origins and Development of Christianity," 269-70. Nikkel notes, 'in Dinka symbolism the right hand is normally superior to the left. SPLA soldiers hold their gun in the left so that the right is free for defence. In these songs the right hand holds the Bible, offering it a place of special respect and prominence.' Ibid., 270.

by the NSCC as a reflected convergence of Christianity and civil religion. This convergence and the power of Christianity to proffer stability, peace building initiatives and southern reconciliation is illustratively crystallised in an Easter 1985 prayer by Cardinal Gabriel Zubeir Wako:

It has become very difficult
To say the prayer you taught us, Lord.
We suffer at the hands of others so much.
Are we to be the object
Of the Father's Displeasure as well?
For he will not forgive us
Unless we forgive them.
... I have to think this over...
They are forcing me out of my Father's house,
For in this house
There can only be peace and forgiveness.
Stand in our midst, Lord,
And say: PEACE IS WITH YOU.
And may that peace
Re-echo from heart to heart.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ Cardinal Gabriel Zubeir Wako, *Roll Back the Stone of Fear: Prayer-Poems and Letters from the Suffering Church in Sudan*, ed. John Pontifex (Surrey: Aid to the Church in Need, 2005), 15.

Chapter Five

Navigating Reconciliation: The New Sudan Council of Churches in Peace Mediation

‘Even though God has created the ethnic groups it doesn’t mean that God is divided.’

Peter Makuac⁵³⁹

‘The church during this war was the voice of the voiceless. If there was any evil thing done either by the government or by the movement the churches spoke out and disclosed it or challenged it.’

Matthew Mathiang Deng⁵⁴⁰

1991 proved a pivotal year for south Sudan and it began that spring in the refugee camps in Ethiopia, host to approximately 400,000 Sudanese refugees.⁵⁴¹ Following the overthrow of President Haile Mariam Mengistu, Ethiopian forces expelled southern Sudanese refugees and the SPLA from their borders forcing the majority to seek safety in an already strained Upper Nile.⁵⁴² On 28 August 1991 with the tacit blessing of his British wife Emma McCune and the assurances of fellow Upper Nile commander Lam Akol, Reik Machar announced over the SPLA two-way radio network a call for southern Sudanese to overthrow the leadership of

⁵³⁹ Peter Makuac, interview with author, 8 February 2006.

⁵⁴⁰ Matthew Mathiang Deng, Member of the Parliament of Government of South Sudan and former Director of New Sudan Council of Churches Peace Desk, interview with author, 24 January 2006, Nairobi.

⁵⁴¹ “Ethiopia: Human Rights Crisis as Central Power Crumbles,” *UNHCR* (April 1991), available from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/e/ethiopia/ethiopia914.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 16 November 2007.

⁵⁴² As Ethiopian forces attacked Sudanese refugees scrambling en masse across the river ‘Sudan[ese] government forces bombarded them, killing mostly civilian women and children.’ Amir H. Idris, *Sudan’s Civil War: Slavery, Race and Formational Identities* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 129. For the perspective of one disenchanted southern Sudanese high-ranking military officer on the Sudanese evacuation of Ethiopia see Lam Akol, *SPLM/SPLA: Inside an African Revolution* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 2001), 191-8. For more on how the Ethiopian conflict impacted the broader Horn of Africa see for example John Prendergast and Mark Duffield, “Liberation Politic in Ethiopia and Eritrea,” in *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution*, eds. Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), 35-51; Michela Wrong, *I Didn’t Do It For You: How the World Used and Abused a Small African Nation* (London: Harper Perennial), 200.

John Garang.⁵⁴³ With that announcement Machar split the SPLA, unleashed a tribal and ethnic fury and ushered in a decade of the bloodiest fighting in southern Sudan as southerners turned on each other.⁵⁴⁴ Ignited by the Nuer attack on the Dinka town of Bor, site of one of the single greatest massacres in southern Sudan, the Upper Nile quickly fragmented into ethnic warlords who easily shifted allegiances to maximise tribal positions as southerners attacked southerners.⁵⁴⁵ In the following year and a half the US Committee on Refugees estimated that in Upper Nile alone 300,000 people were killed.⁵⁴⁶

It was this context of southern disintegration and ethnic militarisation that in 1991 the door was opened for one other significant development. Founded one year earlier the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) correctly perceived that the fragmentation of the SPLA provided a unique opportunity for the NSCC to directly grapple with the southern political situation as an independent platform.⁵⁴⁷ Nurtured by an ecumenical spirit that permeated the Ethiopian refugee camps in 1989 key church leaders approached John Garang and the SPLA about constituting a new council of churches with a spiritual and administrative mandate for the 'liberated' areas of south Sudan.⁵⁴⁸ The committee recommended the Catholic Bishop of Torit,

⁵⁴³ For more on Emma McCune and her relationship with Reik Machar see Deborah Scroggins, *Emma's War: Love, Betrayal and Death in the Sudan* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004).

⁵⁴⁴ For more on the splintering of the SPLA see Douglas H. Johnson, "The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism," in *African Guerrillas*, ed. Christopher Clapham (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 53-72.

⁵⁴⁵ In the attack on Bor children, women and civilians were targeted and murdered in an often vicious fashion explicitly antagonistic to indigenous patterns of morality where 'in intertribal warfare... women and children were neither speared nor enslaved.' E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "The Nuer of the Southern Sudan," in *African Political Systems*, eds. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 283. For more on southern military attempts to undermine moral taboos tied to traditional fighting see Sharon E. Hutchinson, "A Curse from God? Religious and Political Dimensions of the Post-1991 Rise of Ethnic Violence in South Sudan," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, no. 2 (June 2001): 307-31.

⁵⁴⁶ John Prendergast, *Crisis Response: Humanitarian Band-Aids in Sudan and Somalia* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), 46. For an historical overview of the traditional antagonism and expansionist policies pursued by the two largest Nilotic groups, the Dinka and the Nuer see Stephanie Beswick, *Sudan's Blood Memory: The Legacy of War, Ethnicity, and Slavery in Early South Sudan* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004); Raymond C. Kelly, *The Nuer Conquest: The Structure and Development of an Expansionist System* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1985), 9-68.

⁵⁴⁷ Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier, Assistant Director of Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency and former Vice Chairman of the NSCC, interview with author, 14 January 2006, Nairobi.

⁵⁴⁸ 'The first committee of the NSCC in Ethiopia included the following: Rev Peter Pal Kweth (Moderator, Presbyterian Church), Rev John Jal Cop (Presbyterian Church), Brother John Jok Chol (Presbyterian Church), Fr Benjamin Madhol Akot (Catholic Church), Brother Abraham Mayom Athiang (Episcopal Church), Rev Peter Bol Arok (Episcopal Church), Rev Matthew Aguto Kok

Bishop Paride Taban, and the Episcopalian Bishop Nathaniel Garang from Bor as the initial leaders of the NSCC. In January 1990 John Garang agreed to the proposal because:

For the Movement, this had several advantages. It improved its credential with the industrialised countries, by contriving simultaneously to suggest religious freedom and Christian identity, in contrast to the newly-installed Islamic regime in the North. It hoped this might stimulate western countries to grant aid to the South. At the same time, NSCC would provide convenient channels for assistance particularly from Christian organisations abroad. There was also the role of Christianity as a reinforcement of popular resolve in the struggle.⁵⁴⁹

On 17 January 1990 John Garang announced over the SPLA radio network the formation of the NSCC under the leadership of Taban and Garang though the two Bishops themselves were not consulted about the utilisation of the SPLA Radio and were deeply disquieted about the political implications of its usage and of the inclusion of the words 'New Sudan' in the official title, and as a result initially withdrew their involvement.⁵⁵⁰ It was only after senior Sudanese church leaders in Ethiopia sent Abraham Mayom to personally lobby Taban and Garang that they relented in February and agreed to become the NSCC's first Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.⁵⁵¹ As their first official responsibility they jointly visited the Vatican and the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Indicative of the NSCC's desire to retain independence from the SPLA, in 1990 Bishops Taban and Garang headquartered the new council of churches in Nairobi, Kenya and agreed to the appointment of American Roger Schrock from the Church of the Brethren as Executive Secretary. Schrock was a committed pacifist who 'brought a new and challenging biblical and theological approach' that would profoundly shape the future development of the NSCC.⁵⁵² Following the fragmentation of the SPLA the NSCC launched a Peace Desk in 1992 though the majority of the endeavours undertaken by the council focused on relief and aid

(Pentecostal Church).' Roland Werner, William Anderson, Andrew Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment*, 533 fn 15.

⁵⁴⁹ *Great Expectations: The Civil Roles of the Churches in Southern Sudan* (London: African Rights, 1995), 10.

⁵⁵⁰ Roland Werner, William Anderson, Andrew Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment*, 533.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 656.

disbursement.⁵⁵³ In 1994 Rev Haruun Ruun from the Sudan Interior Church was appointed as Executive Secretary and it was under his leadership, as Chapters Five and Six will clearly indicate, that the NSCC cultivated an independent voice from the SPLA that increasingly advocated and facilitated the development of peace.

The NSCC developed in a context where the original SCC had been effectively contained by the Government of Sudan to areas located in the north and firmly under governmental control. In terms of church membership the NSCC ‘follows the same pattern in the north of full membership and participation by Catholics allowing for a unified stance for all churches in the South.’⁵⁵⁴ Every major denomination including Catholic, Episcopal, Church of Christ and Pentecostal joined the NSCC as full council members. Guided under the carefully worded rubric, ‘SCC and NSCC are two expressions of one ecumenical reality,’⁵⁵⁵ the NSCC and SCC remained in active communication and when possible joint participation perhaps most clearly expressed in the issuance of dual declarations such as the decisive document *Let My People Choose* circulated in 2002.⁵⁵⁶ Organisationally the NSCC differed from the SCC in that the NSCC consistently initiated endeavours, built programme capacities and then spun those programmes into affiliated but separate organisations rather than retaining them in the council of churches themselves. This was done in order to concentrate on new



**Figure 23 – Nairobi Office Complex
Housing NSCC**

⁵⁵³ Initially the Peace Desk was concerned with the resolution of local grassroots conflicts and towards this end hosted a number of workshops that were particularly ‘successful in Eastern Equatoria where priests of the Diocese of Torit were instrumental in ending cattle disputes between the Boya and Didinga people. From 1996 the grassroots work of the department had been led by a Sudanese coordinator.’ Ibid., 656-7.

⁵⁵⁴ Hadley Jenner, “Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, Case Study: “When Truth is Denied, Peace Will Not Come: The People-to-People Peace Process of the New Sudan Council of Churches”” (Cambridge: Reflecting on Peace Practice Project Collaborative for Development Action, 2000), 11, available from <http://www.cdainc.com/publications/rpp/casestudies/rppCase04NSCC.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 17 November 2007.

⁵⁵⁵ Roland Werner, William Anderson, Andrew Wheeler, *Day of Devastation Day of Contentment*, 641.

⁵⁵⁶ This document will be more fully analysed in Chapter Six as it details the favourable NSCC and SCC stance on the southern Sudanese Right to Self-Determination.

areas of concern and avoid the SCC pitfall of ‘a hierarchical and centralized administration with little devolution of authority.’⁵⁵⁷ Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, in 2006 the NSCC and SCC remerged into a single council of churches primarily based in Khartoum with the majority of the leadership stemming from southern Sudanese associated with the NSCC.

Throughout the 1990s particularly after the appointment of Haruun Ruun as Executive Secretary the NSCC increasingly crystallised a voice of independence that criticised both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A. Disillusionment with the SPLM/A grew as human rights violations committed by the SPLA progressively became apparent. NSCC awareness regarding atrocities occurring within southern Sudan stemmed from the council’s ability to maintain ongoing connections with the grassroots of southern Sudan that primarily stemmed from four related sources.

First, the NSCC maintained an active radio presence inside south Sudan. The NSCC operated six NSCC Centres geographically spread throughout the south with each centre equipped with a radio and accompanying staff who were responsible for relaying information to and from Nairobi and the NSCC headquarters.⁵⁵⁸ Connected to each Centre was a place of simple accommodation reserved for either visiting NSCC staff or for travelling denominational representatives ensuring that the Centres functioned as key hubs through which information could be quickly and reliably passed onto the outside world.⁵⁵⁹ In addition on 23 December 2000 the ‘Voice of Hope’ radio station was launched in Kampala, Uganda.⁵⁶⁰ Funded by the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation, Pax Christi, the Dutch National Radio World Service and the Dutch Christian Broadcasting Company, ‘effective day-to-day control of the radio was vested in the New Sudan Council of Churches.’⁵⁶¹ At its

⁵⁵⁷ Jan Sterkenburg, John Kirkby and Phil O’Keefe, “Refugee and Rural Development: A Comparative Analysis of Project Aid in Sudan and Tanzania,” in *African Refugees: Development Aid and Repatriation*, eds. Howard Adelman and John Sorenson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 203.

⁵⁵⁸ Michael Ouko, New Sudan Council of Churches Peace Desk, interview with author, 25 January 2006, Nairobi.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Hansjoerg Biener, “Radio for Peace, Democracy and Human Rights,” available from <http://www.evrel.ewf.uni-erlangen.de/pesc/peaceradio-SDN.html#SRS>; Internet; accessed on 9 July 2008.

⁵⁶¹ “Prolonging Conflict and Division in Sudan? The Dutch Government’s Funding of the “Voice of Hope” Radio Station” (London: European Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2001), available from http://www.espac.org/sudan_euro/voice_hope.asp; Internet; accessed on 17 November 2007.

inception some '2000 radio sets were circulated among churches and tribal leaders in the refugee camps' and at its height the station broadcast for a total of four and half hours spread throughout Saturday to Tuesday.⁵⁶² In 2004 the name changed to Radio Nile Broadcasting and though the operation was cancelled in the summer of 2006 due to a lack of funding the programme operated as an effective voice of civil society and the NSCC during the height of both the people-to-people peacemaking process and the negotiation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in a format that reinforced the role of the NSCC and a southern collective identification with Christianity.⁵⁶³

Second and related to the above, the NSCC also relied upon radio networks built and maintained by the various church denominations. For example the PCOS employed a fulltime radio operator based in Lokichogio tasked to monitor the airwaves, transcribe any incoming messages and relay them to denominational leadership based in Loki and in Nairobi.⁵⁶⁴ Due to a cultivated ecumenism and a heightened sense of necessitated cooperation the NSCC was able to consistently rely on member bodies for the collection and dispersal of reliable information throughout the refugee camps and many areas of southern Sudan.⁵⁶⁵ Similarly the NSCC also utilised personal relationships with various SPLM/A leaders as a third source from which they could cull relevant information.

Finally, the NSCC also relied on the personal interchange of 'foot traffic' to and from southern Sudan. Sudanese travelling to and from Sudan, the refugee camps and Nairobi frequently carried with them letters and other forms of personal information addressed to either denominational leaders or the NSCC itself.⁵⁶⁶ In addition, official NSCC business frequently required staff members to travel into southern Sudan for programme observation and mobilisation. The people-to-people peace programme, which will be explored in the following section, was particularly staff intensive requiring mobilisers to spend multiple weeks walking through large

⁵⁶² Hansjoerg Biener, "Radio for Peace."

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Personally observed by the author 29 January 2006.

⁵⁶⁵ For one example of an officially conducted NSCC visit through the offices of the PCOS to Kakuma Refugee Camp during a time of ethnic militarisation see 61-2.

⁵⁶⁶ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 25 January 2006.

areas of south Sudan garnering information and support for the peace programme allowing detailed examination and dissemination of information related to the NSCC.

The NSCC was successful in facilitating the road to southern peace primarily because it retained consistently strong links with the grassroots of southern Sudan. Importantly however the key to this connection was not necessarily direct NSCC personnel but the ability of the staff to rely on an expanding pastoral and evangelist network that relayed information, sentiments and activities through radio transactions and their respective denominations to the NSCC. Communities within southern Sudan faced an array of difficulties ranging from isolation, SPLA control and governmental jurisdiction as was represented in the three preceding case studies. Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi form an interlocking basis that demonstrates that although the exact influence differs within each context overall churches exerted strong impulses toward peacemaking and communal stabilisation regardless of where they were located along the continuum of war and social instability. As anthropologist Sharon Hutchinson notes in specific relation to the Nuer but with much broader implication, 'Christianity came to symbolize for many Nuer the possibilities of political equality, community development, and self-enhancement in the context of an increasingly coercive and stratified nation-state inspired by Islamic fundamentalist ideals.'⁵⁶⁷ Christianity grew because it functioned as a force of resistance, proffered communal benefits and generated an empowering framework of interpretation that created a nascent civil religion diffused throughout southern Sudan as was detailed in Chapter Four. The NSCC therefore generally capitalised on this emerging consensus and broad-based church networks the specifics of which are analysed in the representative case studies of Kakuma Refugee Camp, Hajj Yusuf, Khartoum and Oligi Refugee Camp. By utilising three different case studies in three distinct social and ethnic contexts this thesis allows a limited triangulation of information that in this instance points towards the validity of an overarching conceptualisation of the church as an effective grassroots mobiliser of peace upon which the NSCC built a more national campaign that significantly contributed to the national resolution of the civil war as will be explored in Chapters Five and Six.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁷ Sharon E. Hutchinson, *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 346.

⁵⁶⁸ For more on the methodological use of case studies see Kathleen M Eisenhardt, "Building Theories From Case Study Research," in *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion*, eds. A Michael Huberman and Matthew B Miles (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 5-35.

The NSCC through its ecumenical relationships, nurtured denominational cooperation and southern administrative centres was able to effectively function as an independent voice on behalf of southern Sudanese Christians, and due to the lack of alternative civil society structures of southern Sudanese more generally, even when the NSCC did not have direct connection to a specific locale. That the NSCC is credited with exerting a beneficial influence upon the peace process is partially indicated by the way in which individuals without NSCC affiliation within the three analysed contexts consistently ascribed authority and legitimacy to the role the churches played in establishing southern Sudanese peace. For example Andrew Onziga the Programme Manager of Education Access Africa with oversight of the NGOs' activities across northern Uganda commented, 'the origins of this peace... I say was a pressure by the churches on the government and on the SPLA.'⁵⁶⁹ With a northern Sudanese perspective and personal involvement with the negotiations of the CPA, Dr Taib Hag-Atia the Director of the University of Khartoum Centre for Peace and Research expounded:

[The] SPLM is not a particularly religious organisation. That was my idea coming from Garang. But the church has a very important influence and the Sudanese are very respectful of that denomination. The Sudan Council of Churches or the New Sudan... through their own actions among later SPLA people or southern Sudanese people at large... and through their contacts with the international community and the American President I think it could be said they were influential in pushing SPLM more and more towards negotiations.⁵⁷⁰

Another individual in Hajj Yusuf commented, 'during the war of twenty-one years the voice of the church was still [speaking] on behalf of the people, their life and the suffering. The church is the one that is speaking on behalf of them.'⁵⁷¹

The NSCC was effective in pursuing the road to peace because of its ongoing connections to the grassroots of southern Sudan through radio networks and ecumenical relationships and because of the spread of Christianity and Christian identification as represented in the previously analysed case studies of Kakuma, Khartoum and Oligi. As the NSCC developed it increasingly functioned as a repository of grassroots sentiments that it voiced to the SPLM/A and to the international community. These ideals led the NSCC to a more balanced and nuanced political position that routinely criticised both the Government of Sudan and

⁵⁶⁹ Andrew Onziga, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁵⁷⁰ Taib Hag-Atia, Director of the University of Khartoum Centre for Peace and Research, interview with author, 29 March 2006, Khartoum.

⁵⁷¹ Paul Elianai, interview with author, 24 March 2006.

the SPLM/A, endeavoured to build reconciliation between militarised southern ethnicities following the split of the SPLM/A in 1991 and lobbied the international community for greater involvement in the IGAD peace process. The NSCC implicitly recognised that conflict transformation occurs with the strategic targeting of three levels of affected population and corresponding leadership: top or elite, national or mid-level and grassroots.⁵⁷² The NSCC therefore developed as an authentic independent southern Sudanese voice that engaged in a process of political reconciliation and peace mediation, internal diplomacy and international advocacy and thereby impacted the road to Sudanese peace.

This chapter will specifically focus on exploring two of the strategies employed by the NSCC that accelerated the southern Sudanese peace process. The first section will analyse efforts undertaken by the NSCC after the 1991 split to initiate a tactical partnership with mid-level southern Sudanese leaders in order to rehabilitate traditional leadership structures and mediate peace and reconciliation within the grassroots through the people-to-people peace process. Towards this end section one will examine several initial steps, detail the Wunlit Peace Conference as a relevant example, review the implementation of Wunlit and other NSCC initiated peace efforts and conclude with an analysis of the influence of NSCC peace-brokered events on southern communal stabilisation and the national resolution of the civil war. The second section will focus on ways in which NSCC diplomacy built upon reconciled mid-level and grassroots constituencies in order to influence elite SPLM/A leadership and apply pressure on that leadership to pursue a negotiated peace with the Government of Sudan.

⁵⁷² For more on the development of these categories see John Paul Lederach, "Conflict Transformation in Protracted Internal Conflicts: The Case for a Comprehensive Framework," in *Conflict Transformation*, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 201-22.

A. The NSCC and People-to-People Peace

Initial Steps: Akobo, Yei and Lokichogio

In 1993 a major ethnic feud erupted between two segments of the Nuer, the Jikany and the Lou. A minor fishing incident quickly escalated into outright conflagration resulting in numerous deaths, cattle raids and burned villages. Machar attempted to intervene and reconcile the segments but was repeatedly rebuffed. In frustration Machar eventually responded to an offer by the Presbyterian Church of Sudan to mobilise a reconciliation initiative. Personally approached by Reik Machar and appointed as the lead coordinating chairman Reverend Matthew Mathiang Deang, an ethnic Nuer, began laying the foundation for a course that would radically alter south Sudan. Expanding on traditional approaches to peace building, Deang turned to the NSCC as a source of encouragement, support and fundraising. Under Deang's guidance in 1994 the PCOS hosted the Akobo Peace Conference a process that lasted forty-five days and dramatically demonstrated the impact coordinated church reconciliation efforts could exert on fragmented and war-wearied south Sudan. As one observer noted:

Each day's sessions started and ended with Christian worship led by the Presbyterian church leaders. Reflections on values, appeals to truth-telling, issues of sin, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation were all a part of the Peace Conference. There was no dichotomy between the secular and the spiritual. Issues of peace included compensation for losses, administration of grazing lands and water resources, payment of taxes, reconciliation of people, and structural arrangements for implementing a peace agreement, including special courts and police authority.⁵⁷³

Spurred by the PCOS' success at Akobo and a rising grassroots clamour for reconciliation between Dinka and Nuer ethnic segments now fully engaged in a war of militarised revenge cycles, civilian attrition and Kalishnikov justice the NSCC re-evaluated its priorities throughout 1995-1996 ultimately deciding to shift away from relief towards peace mediation.⁵⁷⁴ Lead by Haruun Ruun, in 1997 the NSCC eased

⁵⁷³ William O. Lowrey, "Passing the Peace... People to People: The Role of Religion in an Indigenous Peace Process Among the Nuer People of Sudan" (Ph.D. diss., The Union Institute Graduate School, 1996), 158-9.

⁵⁷⁴ 'Although aid agencies may not have been keen to admit it, providing a few sacks of food was virtually the same as providing a Kalishnikov rifle. They could be exchanged for each other within hours of delivery.' Tony Vaux, *The Selfish Altruist: Relief Work in Famine and War* (London: Earthscan Publications, 2001), 82.

its overtures for reconciliation between John Garang and Reik Machar and with uncertainty and potentially great risk engaged in direct conversation with the SPLA. Termed the 'Yei Dialogue,' the rapprochement between NSCC and SPLA opened further the plausibility of NSCC involvement in internal southern Sudanese reconciliation and will be more fully discussed in the second section of this chapter. One result of this dialogue however was an invitation to thirty-five Dinka and Nuer chiefs to travel to Lokichogio and discuss the fragmentation of southern Sudan.

Drawing together participants from the West Bank region of Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile 3-11 June 1998, NSCC leadership conscientiously decided to bypass upper military echelons and focus on building sustainable peace at a grassroots and local level beginning in one of the most severely affected areas, the West Bank of the Nile. Flown into the arid north-western Kenyan town of Lokichogio this meeting was the first time area chiefs were able to collectively discuss the situation, shared insecurity, mutual grief and possible reconciliation and restoration endeavours. Chaired by NSCC leadership, after numerous tense moments and individual recounting of inflicted atrocity the chiefs reached a consensus to seek peace and signed the Loki Accord detailing steps to end the internal fighting, de-escalate the area and pursue a broad inter-communal reconciliation conference. Demonstrating the critical partnership established between the NSCC and local chiefs to jointly corroborate in the peace initiative, *Inside Sudan* recounts the following:

At one point, Bishop Nathaniel Garang [a Dinka], spoke about the "chair of leadership". With his right hand he lifted a heavy wooden chair and held it above his head, saying "*Who will help me with this burden?*" He said the chair represented the heavy load the people had to carry because of the leadership. The weight of the chair and his arthritis distressed him, but he held it firm and called again in distress. Many wanted to help, but it was Chief William Ruaei, one of the elder Nuer Chiefs, who shouted out the name of his favourite bull in praise and called out, "*I will help you with your burden!*" They held the chair together and slowly lowered it to the floor between them. This symbolic imagery of reconciliation and cooperation was a key turning point toward peacemaking.⁵⁷⁵

Wunlit Peace Conference

At first known in circulated NSCC documents only as XXXXX, Wunlit is a small Dinka village in Tonj County that did not appear on any known maps. As the

⁵⁷⁵ New Sudan Council of Churches. *Inside Sudan: The Story of People-to-People Peacemaking in Southern Sudan* (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2002), 51.

planned site of a major reconciliation initiative between southern communities its location was shrouded in secrecy in order to provide an additional layer of security from marauding forces and government bombing expeditions. Telar Deng and other NSCC personnel travelled throughout the neighbouring Dinka and Nuer areas laying the foundation for peace, inviting participants, forming security contingencies and mobilising support. Matthew Mathiang Deang, hired by the NSCC following the Akobo Peace Conference, was intimately involved in this process and described how the aim of the Wunlit Conference was that ‘there was fighting between the two communities for seven years so the time had come now that we bring the leaders of those communities together and they talk about their issues.’⁵⁷⁶

In addition to mobilising southern communities the NSCC representatives also focused on securing SPLA concurrence, a proposition in which ‘there was strong resistance from the start from late Dr. John [Garang]’ who ironically, reflecting Khartoum policy desired to utilise ‘naked military force in order to subdue others rather than having political settlements with the factions that were opposed to him.’⁵⁷⁷ Salva Kiir however overcame Garang’s opposition and personally oversaw all security arrangements including bringing to justice a group of Dinka raiders who had attacked Nuer villages during the mobilisation process.⁵⁷⁸ Reik Machar, now openly aligned with the Government of Sudan and forces known as the United Democratic Salvation Front, also approved of the conference, encouraged Nuer participation and hid the exact location from opposition government forces. Though the conference could not occur without the approval of Machar and Garang, they and their related forces played a minimal role in organising the event and during Wunlit were consistently sidelined. Kiir only participated in the opening and closing remarks of the ceremony and the organisers of Wunlit refused to let a delegation commissioned by Machar address the gathering.⁵⁷⁹ Wunlit, as all other people-to-people peace initiatives, reflected a process initiated and organised by the New Sudan Council of Churches in which commanders would arrange security, local

⁵⁷⁶ Matthew Mathiang Deang, interview with author, 24 January 2006.

⁵⁷⁷ Telar Deng, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs (South Sudan) and former New Sudan Council of Churches Peace Mobiliser, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

⁵⁷⁸ New Sudan Council of Churches, *Inside Sudan*, 53.

⁵⁷⁹ Jemera Rone, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights* (London: Human Rights Watch, 2003), 218-9.

chiefs would primarily negotiate settlement and local church and traditional religious leaders would bless the reconciliation effort.

The West Bank was an area infused with fear, traditional mistrust, hatred and ongoing cattle raids. Success was never assumed and apprehension was high in an environment of massive south on south fighting and killing at an unprecedented level. As William Ruei Kuong, one of the traditional priests of the leopard skin prayed during the Wunlit conference:

I speak to you, O God of all. Our God, with my brothers, this is the land. We, all of us, we Southerners, we are all people of one God. We have fought each other for many years, O God. I myself have been a great fighter. My ancestors before me were warriors, and I fought fiercely for many years. We elders know the history of these conflicts. Formerly we observed certain restrictions. The young men had the right to kill other warriors, but never did they kill women or children or elders or young boys. When I used to go raiding I advised people never to kill women or children. Today, however, we have transgressed, killing anyone we meet, young and old, woman and children. Because of this slaughter God has brought us together in this meeting to discuss these things. It is now many years since we have been reconciled and cut away our conflicts, and yet our hostilities still remain.⁵⁸⁰

In this acrid milieu, two weeks prior to Wunlit the NSCC chartered a plane and flew five reputed Nuer chiefs and one designated women's representative along with several church leaders to Dinkaland in early February 1999 as a confidence building initiative. Following a successful visit five Dinka chiefs and one Dinka women's representative travelled back with the Nuer to the town of Leer. Warmly received and given gifts symbolising peace and unification the delegation demonstrated to the relevant constituencies that travel to Wunlit across ethnic and military division was possible and that for the first time during the second civil war grassroots mobilisation could secure peace between traditional southern hostilities now fuelled by modern armaments and the divisive politics of the educated elite.

Over the next two weeks southerners and international observers slowly trickled into Wunlit by foot, vehicle and air finding a newly constructed 'peace village' that consisted of one hundred fifty *tukuls* for accommodation, a conference hall prepared for one thousand participants, a store, fifteen pit-latrines and an improved road and airstrip infrastructure.⁵⁸¹ These preparations had been arranged by Mario Muor Muor and reflected efforts by both the local community and

⁵⁸⁰ "Invocation by William Ruei Kuong from Ganyiel," available from <http://southsudanfriends.org/wunlit/speeches.html>; Internet; accessed on 9 November 2007.

⁵⁸¹ Telar Deng, "Bahr el Ghazal Field Report: Nuer-Dinka Peace Process 12 September-1 October 1998" (Nairobi: Unpublished, 1998), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

interested international parties such as World Vision. As the conference opened on 27 February 1999 an era of unparalleled internal southern reconciliation endeavours facilitated by the New Sudan Council of Churches was inaugurated.

The opening ceremony however commenced with a specifically traditionalist Sudanese indigenous religious appeal – the slaughtering of *Mabior*, the white bull.⁵⁸² As the most prominent elder men gathered to sit and the youth sang and danced *Mabior* was led to the centre and tied to a fixed post. Increasingly the crowd pressed in agitating the tethered bull until silenced by the traditional chiefs and religious leaders who pronounced that *Mabior* would symbolise the desire and seriousness for peace and reconciliation. The crowd quietly murmured its approval and offered short invocations of forgiveness ensuring that hearts were prepared and commitment solidified. Several young men from the various conflicting tribes and sub-clans emerged from the crowd and approached the bull and after wrestling *Mabior* to the ground one of the youth with a single thrust of a spear pierced the neck of the bull beginning the process of draining the blood from *Mabior*. As the symbolism and solemnity of the moment resonated among the crowd the sacrificial death was consummated as the meat was divided among the participants forming the basis of an ensuing communal meal.

Commenting on the meaning and implications of the sacrifice of *Mabior* on the peace process Michael Ouko of the NSCC Peace Desk described:

There were also traditionalists there. They came with their bulls to sacrifice, I mean to sacrifice to their gods, to shed blood and see. The killing of the bull was to show that anybody who breaks the covenant will die the same way that the bull is being slaughtered. So that was a symbolic angle, ritual, and of course it's not a Christian practice but the church gave, they respected the opinion of the other, I mean the traditionalists. So by virtue of the NSCC accepting these traditional practices to partner with and also allowing the Christians to take part that gives them a kind of openness of the council to different divergent lines.⁵⁸³

That is while the NSCC was at the forefront of organising and facilitating the peace process it understood that success hinged on the personal and communal imbuing of a reconciliation morality that would shape and influence southern response long after the peace conference was completed. The NSCC therefore conscientiously worked to create an open space that built upon incorporated traditional beliefs and practices,

⁵⁸² The following is based on New Sudan Council of Churches, *Inside Sudan*, 59-61.

⁵⁸³ Michael Ouko, New Sudan Council of Churches Peace Desk, interview with author, 18 January 2006, Nairobi.

minimised their own overt participation and emphasised the importance of traditional chiefs and religious practitioners.

Over the next days Wunlit shifted to a period of recounting of issues and war inflicted damages. Each of the six Dinka and six Nuer counties incorporated into the Wunlit process were apportioned three representatives with an allotted time of ninety minutes of dedicated sharing during which they could not be interrupted.⁵⁸⁴ One Dinka chief for example shared:

We have the chief called Mading Manyel who was killed together with his entire family and 18 cattle camps. Also 150 people were killed, and 5 of our young women were taken who are with them until the present day... Also, during the rainy season, they came and attacked the place of Makuac. When they came back to attack for the second time they took everything, leaving not even a dog or a chicken. They raided the entire cattle camp. All the homesteads were burned, all of Makuac was burned to the ground.⁵⁸⁵

Another, Chief Rec Anyeth Rec lamented:

People have covered many issues, speaking of cattle raided, people abducted, but I must add the following. A group of people raided my house. As they came they found my wife in labour, and a neighbour had gone to find a midwife to assist. The wife was inside a mosquito net to deliver. The raiders killed the husband, the midwife, and the woman who was delivering, and the new-born baby. I ask what kind of humanity is that that would kill a baby that was about to see the world for the first time?⁵⁸⁶

For many the articulation of experienced individual and communal horror provided the deeply needed catharsis that prepared the ground for reconciliation.⁵⁸⁷ The organisers of Wunlit understood that ‘a peacemaking process that enables the parties to reflect on the spiritual implications of their behaviour... and on their destructive actions in general, is likely to lead to a more conducive atmosphere for the quest of just and lasting solutions to their disputes.’⁵⁸⁸ Arising out of these narratives the Conference Management Team identified six categories of articulated

⁵⁸⁴ Jemera Rone, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 219-20.

⁵⁸⁵ Chief Dut Yol, available from <http://southsudanfriends.org/wunlit/day2.html>; Internet; accessed on 9 November 2007.

⁵⁸⁶ Chief Rec Anyeth Rec, available from <http://southsudanfriends.org/wunlit/day5.html>; Internet; access on 9 November 2007.

⁵⁸⁷ Mary Anne Fitzgerald, *Throwing the Stick Forward: The Impact of War on Southern Sudanese Women* (Nairobi: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 2002), 115.

⁵⁸⁸ Hizkias Assefa, “Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: A Philosophy of Peace and Its Implications for Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth in Africa,” in *Peacemaking and Democratisation in Africa: Theoretical Perspectives and Church Initiatives*, eds. Hizkias Assefa and George Wachira (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1996), 50.

difficulty and following the period of storytelling divided participants into six working groups to address the raised issues. The highlighted categories were:

- Missing Persons and Marriages to Abductees
- Reclaiming the Land and Rebuilding Relationships
- Institutional Arrangements
- Monitoring the Borders
- People Outside the Peace Process
- Extending the Peace to the East Bank of the Nile and Equatoria⁵⁸⁹

As the conference drew to a conclusion each of the working groups presented concrete practical steps that could be officially implemented and continued by those present. These resolutions included the declaration of an immediate and permanent ceasefire between Dinka and Nuer in the West Bank region, amnesty for offences committed prior to Wunlit, the repatriation of abducted boys and girls and/or the legalisation of their marriages including the creation of an Abductee Identification Team, the affirmation of free movement and shared commercial enterprises, the formation of dry season joint police forces with administrative and judicial oversight of grazing and fishing areas, the composition of a Dinka-Nuer Peace Council made of county representatives including women representatives and finally, the ongoing extension of similar peace conferences throughout south Sudan.⁵⁹⁰

In a concluding ceremony The Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Covenant was signed and thumb printed by each participant as a testimony of reconciliation to each other, divinely sanctioned and enacted before God and sealed by a second sacrificial slaughter of a white *mabior* bull. Wunlit was a process that sought to forge unity among ethnic groups directly engaged in a cyclical denigration of destruction by building trust between divergent ethnic groups and religious traditions.⁵⁹¹ As Matthew Deang noted, with the engendered ‘openness’ of the conference by the NSCC and the participants themselves, ‘people became trusting.’⁵⁹² As individuals

⁵⁸⁹ New Sudan Council of Churches, “Wunlit Dinka-Nuer Peace Documents” (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 1999), 4.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 4-12.

⁵⁹¹ ‘Trust is an essential element in nation-building... possible only if there is a high level of dialogue and consensus, and that is only certain if religions encourage, uphold and defend democratic principles.’ Elom Dovlo, “Christianity, Nation-Building and National Identity in Ghana: Religious Perspectives,” in *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, eds. James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 186-7.

⁵⁹² Matthew Mathiang Deang, interview with author, 24 January 2006.

began the long trek home following the finalisation of the conference on 8 March there was a renewed sense of hope and possibility that in bypassing military leadership sustainable peace could be built at a grassroots level and southern Sudanese could be reconciled and reunited to face together a larger process of establishing political peace, good governance and development. As one group of scholars noted, 'the reconciliation between these communities that was negotiated at Wunlit after eight years of internecine strife marked a change in the dynamics of the conflict. It was a watershed in the war in South Sudan.'⁵⁹³

Implementation and Consecutive People-to-People Peace Conferences

To a remarkable extent the resolutions adopted at Wunlit were implemented and carefully monitored by a number of newly formed joint peace councils. These peace councils were 'instruments for early warning to monitor the agreement and to detect or identify any underlying issue that might erupt into violent conflict and find ways of preventing it.'⁵⁹⁴ As issues were exposed the councils were empowered to mediate local settlements and had access through radio networks to the NSCC and outside peace coordinators should escalation occur. Carrying local efficacy these councils stretched across traditional ethnic divisions and incorporated multiple communal voices including those traditionally minimised in the public sphere. One council for example was 'made up with the local chiefs and some women and some youths within that committee. It's chaired by a Nuer chief called Isaac Abyok and then the deputy leader he's a Dinka chief. So the churches with some local administration are helping them.'⁵⁹⁵ As was envisioned by the NSCC the peace councils relied on traditional leadership structures while simultaneously modifying those structures by broadening communal participation and intentionally strengthening the political rights of women.

⁵⁹³ Mark Bradbury, John Ryle, Michael Medley and Kwesi Sansculotte-Greenidge, *Local Peace Process in Sudan: A Baseline Study* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2006), 31, available from http://www.riftvalley.net/documents/Local_Peace_Processes_in_Sudan_-_May_2006.pdf; Internet; accessed on 7 November 2007.

⁵⁹⁴ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 25 January 2006, Nairobi.

⁵⁹⁵ Matthew Mathiang Deang, interview with author, 24 January 2006.

Though commitment to the negotiated Wunlit peace was tested on several occasions infractions were resolved and smaller Wunlit II and Wunlit III conferences in 2003 renewed the various agreements, strengthened traditional court systems and expanded security so that the West Bank region of Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile has remained fairly continuously at peace from southern-southern conflict. For example a May 1999 attack by government forces forced Nuer to flee to the Dinka town of Makuac where:

The Dinka welcome of the Nuer was all the more generous because these Dinka had been displaced themselves – by the Nuer now seeking their help. Chief Lino Madut, one of the Dinka who fled Nuer raiders, said Makuac was evacuated by its Dinka residents “during the war with the Nuer which lasted from 1993 to 1999.” He continued, “I’m glad I was in Wunlit.... They [the Nuer] devastated Makuac and today we are brothers. We had a quarrel with our brother but the dispute is over. Today we and they are one.”⁵⁹⁶

Following the success of Wunlit in reconciling West Bank Dinka and Nuer the NSCC turned to forging a similar consensus among the deeply fragmented people of the East Bank, particularly among the Nuer. In August 1999 a number of local Nuer military warlords met in Akobo and with NSCC encouragement brokered a ceasefire with an amalgamation of forces into the Upper Nile Provisional Military Command Council breaking officially from Reik Machar. The NSCC sought to capitalise on this new impetus and hosted the Waat Peace Conference 1-7 November following the format modelled at Wunlit. The composition of the conference did differ from Wunlit however it that ‘the main delegates were military leaders and the meeting became focused on Lou leadership and military issues, with all the factions trying to gain political capital from the event.’⁵⁹⁷

In addition to signing a number of reconciliation, resource sharing and traditional governance strengthening initiatives, Waat also sought to extend the people-to-people peace concept in two significant areas. First, ‘the participants elected the Lou Nuer Peace and Governance council to rebuild the entire civil administration structure from the bottom up, in theory surpassing what had been done at Wunlit.’⁵⁹⁸ Second, following agreement at the Waat Convention, the NSCC helped form the South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) under the leadership of Wal Duany who had been a PCOS facilitator at the Akobo Peace Conference and one

⁵⁹⁶ Jemera Rone, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 285.

⁵⁹⁷ Bradbury, Ryle, Medley and Sansculotte-Greenidge, *Local Peace Process in Sudan*, 51.

⁵⁹⁸ Jemera Rone, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 328.

of the principal NSCC organisers of Wunlit. The aim of the SSLM was to encourage dialogue among the military factions, facilitate political peace and unity and support the principal of southern self-determination through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace initiative, the primary vehicle for Government-SPLA mediation.⁵⁹⁹

Disappointingly however the SSLM quickly deteriorated into another alternate and competing military faction involved in human rights abuses. Furthermore, 'Wal Duany's transformation from a peacemaker to a factional leader' imperilled the neutrality of the NSCC and opened it up to intense criticism from SPLM/A leadership of 'facilitating the formation of a military bloc in the East Bank.'⁶⁰⁰ Compounded by the return of Reik Machar to Upper Nile, his repudiation of the Government of Sudan, the reformation of a military force under his command and ongoing dry season attacks between the Jikany and Gawaar Nuer as one NSCC document admitted, 'by early 2000 it was clear that unity had not been achieved.'⁶⁰¹

In May 2000 the NSCC attempted a second Upper Nile people-to-people peace conference at Liliir in Dinka Bor county seeking to recapture the success of Wunlit by incorporating representatives from all of the tribes living in the East Bank. Outright opposition from Machar, adverse weather conditions and an inadequate mobilisation effort however resulted in an attendance of only one hundred ten, roughly half of the anticipated guests.⁶⁰² Although Liliir failed to negotiate a comprehensive resolution several of the smaller groups present were able to achieve inter-ethnic reconciliation and in the following year thirteen new primary schools were constructed in the Liliir area and five thousand Dinka were repatriated.⁶⁰³ Liliir also confirmed that at the grassroots level much of the population was disillusioned with the current divisive military leadership and open to ongoing attempts to forge southern resolution and reconciliation.

Over the proceeding four years the NSCC continued to host a number of peace conferences and peace education workshops with the majority focused on

⁵⁹⁹ The IGAD peace forum will be explored in Chapter Six.

⁶⁰⁰ Bradbury, Ryle, Medley and Sansculotte-Greenidge, *Local Peace Process in Sudan*, 51.

⁶⁰¹ New Sudan Council of Churches, *Inside Sudan*, 75.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Bradbury, Ryle, Medley and Sansculotte-Greenidge, *Local Peace Process in Sudan*, 52.

building reconciliation within and between the ethnicities of Upper Nile. For example in July 2001 the NSCC facilitated a peace building conference among the Jikany Nuer that addressed inter-sectional fighting, resource sharing and the constituting of a 'one-off special court' that was immediately confirmed by an authorisation from Reik Machar to settle all outstanding cases of inter-tribal homicide and murder accusations.⁶⁰⁴ One month later from 27-31 August 2001 the NSCC hosted a Jikany-Lou peace conference at Pagak under the leadership of Reverend Matthew Mathiang Deang and Reverend John Chuol Duel of the PCOS.⁶⁰⁵ In 2002 the NSCC organised the Nyal Peace Education Workshop in western Upper Nile that included clan chiefs, military commanders, women and youth leaders, local church leaders, school teachers and civil authority officials focusing on discussing themes related to peace and conflict, peace and human rights, communication in peace making and peace and governance.⁶⁰⁶ In December of 2002 Matthew Deang also chaired a Gawaar-Lou Peace and Reconciliation Conference.⁶⁰⁷ In 2004 the NSCC sponsored the Fangak Peace Conference that drew over six hundred delegates and requested ongoing peace endeavours, the construction of schools and the development of infrastructure.⁶⁰⁸

Analysis and Conclusion

The New Sudan Council of Churches consistently understood that Wunlit and the proceeding people-to-people peace conferences were to function as a catalyst for expanding political peace throughout southern Sudan. As one NSCC document elaborated, 'it is intended that People-to-People Peacemaking will be expanded and that justice and sustainable peace will be achieved... by adopting positive aspects of

⁶⁰⁴ New Sudan Council of Churches, "Gurnyang Declaration – The Jikany Nuer Peace Covenant" (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2001).

⁶⁰⁵ New Sudan Council of Churches, "The Lou-Jikany Nuer Peace Covenant" (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2001).

⁶⁰⁶ New Sudan Council of Churches, "Report of Nyal Peace Education Workshop, Upper Nile" (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2002).

⁶⁰⁷ New Sudan Council of Churches, "Gawaar and Lou Peace and Reconciliation Conference Documents" (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2002).

⁶⁰⁸ New Sudan Council of Churches, "Report on the Fangak Peace Conference" (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2004).

social change that are rooted in a synthesis of traditional, modern and Christian values, beliefs, customs that are relevant for application in the Sudanese setting.’⁶⁰⁹ It was the intention of the NSCC to utilise the people-to-people peace endeavours as an embryonic spark to a broader negotiated resolution of the civil war. Importantly, to a certain extent the NSCC was successful in this enterprise. As Michael Ouko of the NSCC Peace Desk noted, ‘Wunlit opened space for, I mean, proved that reconciliation is possible, forgiveness is possible... They put a lot of pressure on the people to stop unnecessary fighting.’⁶¹⁰

The people-to-people peace initiatives occurred in contexts of rampant killing and communal devastation. South Sudan had splintered into competing segments of unchecked military competition that scattered communities, ravaged livestock, depleted resources and hastened famine. As one individual noted, ‘you know the guerrilla tactics and the guerrilla war... there is no law in the guerrilla. Either they kill or you will die.’⁶¹¹

In this caustic environment the New Sudan Council of Churches introduced a peace process that renewed hope, demonstrated political possibility, reunited grassroots communities and profoundly reverberated in the internationally sanctioned political peace process between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A. Certainly the NSCC was not alone in attempting to develop local peace initiatives. One of the official strategies of the SPLM/A was ‘peace through development’ and towards this end they hosted various conferences such as one at Rumbek in Bahr el Ghazal in June 2001 that sought to empower civil society to work in conjunction with the SPLM/A in the ‘liberated’ areas.⁶¹² Peace through development however never achieved a critical capacity and was often suspected of merely being a front for SPLM/A confiscation of local resources.

⁶⁰⁹ New Sudan Council of Churches, *Building Hope for Peace Inside Sudan: People-to-People Peacemaking Process, Methodologies and Concepts among Communities of Southern Sudan* (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2004), 11.

⁶¹⁰ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁶¹¹ David Ibon, interview with author, 17 January 2006.

⁶¹² Alfred Sebit Lokuji, “Workshop on Peace and Development, Rumbek, Bahr el Ghazal” (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army, Unpublished 2001), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi. See also “Peace Through Development: Perspectives and Prospects in the Sudan,” (Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, Unpublished, 2000), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

The process created by the NSCC profoundly influenced other indigenous and international peace endeavours within southern Sudan. For example the All Upper Nile Peace Conference in June 2003 funded in part by the United States Agency for Development and the Government of Italy through the Sudan Peace Fund was co-chaired by the former PCOS Moderator Reverend John Gatluok and Sudanese Ambassador Philip Obang and was specifically conceived ‘in the context of the NSCC facilitated people to people peace and reconciliation process.’⁶¹³ PACT International, the primary donor to the Sudan Peace Fund based many of their endeavours on the example and inspiration of the NSCC’s people-to-people peace initiatives.⁶¹⁴

Though the NSCC was the predominant actor in establishing grassroots peace processes in south Sudan, an effort that would over time dramatically increase the unity of south Sudan and serve as a key component to the negotiated CPA, the churches were not alone in securing the implementation of the peace agreements. As one scholar noted:

It would be a major overstatement to credit the peace process and reconciliation effort only to the religious community... It would also be incorrect to think this peace process could have occurred without significant contributions from the religious community. It was the religious leaders, both African Traditional and Christian, who represented the beliefs and sentiments of the people. It was also those leaders who carried the power of the symbols and were vested with the responsibility of reconciling people with one another and reconciling the people with God and the spirits. Without the work of reconciliation, peace agreements written on paper and carrying signatures and thumbprints would be viewed as only documents without substance.⁶¹⁵

While the NSCC was at the forefront of organising, advocating and implementing a grassroots peace process, the methodology employed conscientiously endeavoured to ensure that traditional leaders and partners were the primary actors during the initiative itself and that the NSCC and affiliated church leaders remained visible but secondary contributors. The people-to-people peace proceedings were ‘designed not only to address pressing disputes among communities and ethnic groups, but also to impart enduring conflict resolution and peace-making skills based

⁶¹³ “All Upper Nile Peace Conference, Panyagor, Bor North County” (Upper Nile Peace and Development Peace Task and Upper Nile Inter-Denominational Peace Committee, Unpublished, 2003), 4, Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

⁶¹⁴ Bradbuy, Ryle, Medley and Sansculotte-Greenidge, *Local Peace Process in Sudan*, 54.

⁶¹⁵ William O. Lowrey, “‘Passing the Peace:’ The Role of Religion in Peacemaking among the Nuer in Sudan,” in *Land of Promise: Church Growth in a Sudan at War*, ed. Andrew Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997), 146-7.

upon traditional social structures.’⁶¹⁶ The NSCC and local church actors were critical in engendering a ‘revival of culture... in which communities are solidifying and updating traditional law.’⁶¹⁷ That is the NSCC was the lead agency in facilitating a peace process strengthened and implemented by re-empowered traditional structures.

At every level the NSCC consistently pursued peace building mechanisms beneficial at the grassroots level even when such initiatives minimised the role of the NSCC and promoted traditional leadership. For example in October 2001 the NSCC helped sponsor a seminar funded by the Embassy of Switzerland in Nairobi that convened predominant southern Sudanese civil society advocates to discuss the codification of a quasi-governmental ‘House of Nationality’ that would officially function as the primary vehicle for promoting indigenous conflict mediation and resolution techniques through strengthened traditional leaders and structures.⁶¹⁸

Within the people-to-people peace process the active incorporation of traditional beliefs and practices by the NSCC is perhaps most clearly represented in the intentional inclusion of the slaying of the white *Mabior* bull during opening and closing ceremonies. Traditionally this sacrificial ritual is critical in establishing moral authority, divine sanctification and communal accountability in inter-tribal reconciliation. Theologically however for many Christians the assimilation of a white bull was potentially problematic. As one ECS pastor described, ‘we don’t know before the cow was brought here what was done to it, what kind of words, spellings, what kind of chants were done on the cow before it was slaughtered for you to jump on it.’⁶¹⁹ As a consequence during the ceremony some Christians would observe the killing of the bull and then join together to separately pray for unity while other participants jumped over *Mabior*. The inclusion of this symbolic ritual opened the NSCC to theological criticism both from within southern Sudan and from some external sources. In general during the peace conventions there was little overt insertion of Christian symbolism or theologically based reflection. As

⁶¹⁶ John Prendergast, *Crisis Response: Humanitarian Band-Aids*, 80-1.

⁶¹⁷ John Prendergast, *Frontline Diplomacy: Humanitarian Aid and Conflict in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 131.

⁶¹⁸ “Preserving Unity in Diversity in Southern Sudan: The House of Nationality” (Nairobi: Unpublished, 2001), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

⁶¹⁹ Basil Nyama, pastor of ECS, interview with author, 25 January 2006, Nairobi.

Matthew Deang of the NSCC admitted, ‘the only difference that was different from the traditional, it is the church which was during the opening of the meeting when it started with the Christian worship, when they started with the reading from the Bible. That is the only difference.’⁶²⁰ The primary difference therefore was that it was church leadership that instigated, led and facilitated the conference while the actual mechanics remained largely religiously indigenous based and conveyed. From a Christian theological standpoint the NSCC could have engaged in a more thorough theological reflection and basis for engagement in the peace and reconciliation process.⁶²¹

Politically, however, the broad ecumenism displayed by the inclusion of a *Mabior* bull into the people-to-people peace process proved necessary and effective. Chief Charles Reth Kok, a Wunlit participant, admonished, ‘You Dinka and Nuer, I caution you to be careful of what you observed in *Mabior*. It was very wild. I have come from Akobo, and I have never seen a bull as wild as that bull. Anyone who resumes these conflicts, *Mabior* will take revenge on him, because he died for our reconciliation.’⁶²² Responding to the appropriateness of theological criticism Haruun Ruun who was at the time of these conventions the Executive Secretary of the NSCC responded:

These people have been killing each other and what will close the gap that yeah this is what we can respect? You don’t take things out and put nothing in its place. So when people came in with their bulls this is what they believe... not just believe, but they practice. And because they believe it and because you may not believe it but because you think or believe this is what is going to keep peace you are going to save more lives by doing it. You got to choose. Do you want more lives to be killed because of bull or do you want to save more lives? Because when you kill the bull and if you look at it, killing those bulls and all those things there is no fighting between Nuer and Dinka although the Nuer among themselves had some fighting and maybe Dinka in Bahr el Ghazal but there was no fighting that took place after that between Nuer and Dinka. They became the keepers of their peace.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ Matthew Mathiang Deang, interview with author, 24 January 2006.

⁶²¹ For a southern Sudanese Catholic perspective on the Christian theological basis for reconciliation see Eduard Hiiboro Kussala, *Reconciliation in the Sudan: A Springboard for Social Transformation* (privately printed, 2005), 135-64, University of Durham. For a Protestant viewpoint, Joseph Oriho Abulemoi, *The Church and Social Responsibility in Africa* (privately printed, 2000), Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, Edinburgh.

⁶²² Chief Charles Reth Kok, available from <http://southsudanfriends.org/wunlit/day5.html>; Internet; accessed on 14 November 2007.

⁶²³ Haruun Ruun Lual, Special Advisor to President Omar Bashir and former Executive Secretary of the New Sudan Council of Churches, interview with author, 22 March 2006, Khartoum.

The inclusion of the representative symbolism invested in the ritualistic killing of a white *Mabior* bull was politically astute and facilitated the overarching aim of the NSCC to stand at the forefront of advocating for peace and resolution in a manner that empowered grassroots and traditional structures to maintain ongoing reconciliation. Socially and politically a far greater danger to the NSCC was the threat of political identification or direct repudiation of one of the numerous military divisions. As one scholar expressed, ‘the Sudanese Church in general have great potential to make grassroots peacemaking an effective method for conflict resolution. However, this could only be possible if the church remains neutral to the conflict especially the South-South conflict. This is very difficult to maintain.’⁶²⁴ There was an almost continuous duelling pressure from many of the leading military commanders to co-opt the role of the NSCC and so achieve a greater political capacity and legitimacy on the one hand, and on the other, to limit and disparage the church from infringing on their own political agenda. The NSCC had to maintain a precipitous balance between open engagement with each southern militia and the ongoing vocal criticism of the abuse of human rights regardless of the source of that abuse. The continuance of this demanding tension was most explicitly necessary in the relationship between the NSCC and the SPLM/A as will be explored in the second part of this chapter. Had the NSCC veered too strongly towards union or disavowal with any one of the fragmented southern forces the result would have been an immediate loss of authenticity, barred access to factional opponents and increased physical danger to church leadership. The possibility of deteriorating into such a dangerous alignment was most acute following the Waat Peace Conference and the establishment of the South Sudan Liberation Movement under Wal Duany. In a 2000 strategic review several months after the failure of the Waat reconciliation the NSCC acknowledged that ‘not all politicians respected the independent role of NSCC’ and that there were ‘cases where the church and the politicians were mixed up’ so that churches and their representatives needed to be made more aware about the critical necessity of maintaining NSCC neutrality.⁶²⁵ The people-to-people peace process was most effective when the primary focus was on grassroots leadership and

⁶²⁴ Festus Ufulle Ga-Aro, “Building Bridges, The ECS Contribution to Peacemaking,” in *“But God is Not Defeated!”*, 174.

⁶²⁵ ““Leading From Behind”: A Strategic Review of the Southern Sudanese People to People’s Peace Process and the Support Role NSCC is Undertaking” (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 2000), 9.

constituents and bypassed elite and competing military commanders, and in the end, despite several setbacks the NSCC was able to uphold a tested but closely guarded commitment to impartiality.

Through participation in the people-to-people peace process the NSCC exerted a direct influence on the overarching peace endeavours, contributed to the reunification of south Sudan and helped mediate resolution and reconciliation. John Jok Manyout for example emphasised, ‘the church leaders they are the one who make peace in southern Sudan. The church leaders they are the one who have the way forward for the peace negotiation. They are the one who are bringing different groups [and] different groups together.’⁶²⁶ Another noted, ‘people are addicted to fighting and it has been the major role of church to reconcile people... for example, there is reconciliation and unity among the tribes like the one... [in] Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal and others.’⁶²⁷ The NSCC were capable of effectively functioning as a southern Sudanese peace broker due to at least two interrelated rationales.

First, the NSCC consistently remained open to dialogue and joint participation with traditional leadership and structures.⁶²⁸ At an institutional level this is explicitly expressed in the motto of the NSCC: ‘serving all of God’s people.’ Philosophically undergirding this motto the director of the NSCC peace desk stated:

We are all equal in God. We are all created in God’s image... the holistic development of a human person is based on the principle that God, even Jesus Christ fed them, he clothed them, he gave shelter to them and even gave them refuge. So we believe, the church believes that whoever is tampering with it, with this or whatever government is tampering with all these values is against the human rights.⁶²⁹

The NSCC not only stood at the forefront of advocating for the respect and development of human rights for all southern Sudanese regardless of religious persuasion, the council also led in forging joint tactical partnerships with traditional mid-level leadership in order to broaden awareness, deepen indigenous conceptualisations and enhance effectiveness.

⁶²⁶ John Jok Manyout, interview with author, 9 February 2006.

⁶²⁷ James Ateny Lual, interview with author, 10 February 2006.

⁶²⁸ As was noted at the micro level in Chapters Two through Four there is a strong tendency for church structures and leaders to assimilate and reflect traditional patterns of organisation and interaction. In many respects the NSCC reflected this propensity at the macro level.

⁶²⁹ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

Engagement with traditional patterns of reconciliation influenced NSCC methodology and, in a context of societal breakdown and pervasive ethnically aligned attacks, allowed the NSCC to inherit a traditional mantle of religious peacemaker. Southern Sudanese have long looked towards religious leaders such as priests of the earth to dissolve feuds in part because ‘in such rites the priest of the earth stands between the groups involved and in this sense he may be thought of as outside each. From one perspective he may be said to transcend all groups and thereby partake of all, but from another perspective he may be said to conform properly to none.’⁶³⁰ By depending on ‘persuasion and consensus rather than on coercion and dictation’ NSCC peace facilitators functioned as ‘in Dinka terms, “a man with a cool heart”’ capitalising on the nature of Christianity as a religion exponentially expanding at the grassroots level, affiliated with and open to all ethnicities and thereby critically transcending the conflicting parties.⁶³¹ The ability of the NSCC to remain connected but transcendent increased Christian identification and affiliation and created an inherent willingness and trust among many southern Sudanese to turn towards the church as a central custodian of peace.

The religio-nationalistic tendency of the contemporary war further enhanced the ability of the NSCC to extend southern resolution. Christianity inherited a ‘position which is, on average, *most different* from that of relevant outgroup members and *least different* from that of other ingroup members.’⁶³² That is due to the recent history of south Sudan Christianity was perceived as a counterbalancing

⁶³⁰ T. O. Beidelman, “Nuer Priests and Prophets: Charisma, Authority, and Power among the Nuer,” in *The Translation of Culture: Essays to E. E. Evans-Pritchard*, ed. T. O. Beidelman (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971), 383. For more on the indigenous religious approach and guardianship of peacemaking among the Nuer see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956). For a more explicit focus on the development of the prophetic tradition see Douglas H. Johnson, *Nuer Prophets: A History of Prophecy from the Upper Nile to the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). For a Dinka perspective see Godfrey Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka*. For a related though limited perspective from other Sudanese ethnicities see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, “The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan,” in *Essays in Social Anthropology* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 66-86; M. C. Jedrej, *Ingessana: The Religious Institutions of a People of the Sudan-Ethiopian Borderland* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995).

⁶³¹ Francis Mading Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok: A Biography of Power, Polygyny, and Change* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 38. See also Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka of the Sudan* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1984), 113-14.

⁶³² Penelope Oakes, S. Alexander Haslam and John C. Turner, “The Role in Prototypicality in Group Influence and Cohesion: Contextual Variation in the Graded Structure of Social Categories,” in *Social Identity: International Perspectives*, eds. Stephen Worchel, J. Francisco Morales, Dario Paez and Jean-Claude Deschamps (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 82, italics original.

force to Islam and although significantly different, in terms of societal interaction, related to the concerns and methodology of traditional religion.

Perceived as a hostile force to Islamic domination, neutral towards internal southern demarcations and transcendent to any one southern ethnicity, Christianity retained one other significant continuity with traditional religious practices of reconciliation by functioning as a point of mediatory access between disillusioned grassroots communities and upper level military echelons. Practitioners of indigenous peacemaking were successful in part by relying on a belief that individuals submitting to mediation could do so ‘without loss of dignity where he would not have given way to his opponent.’⁶³³ Among many southern Sudanese there was a latent belief that the churches would not violate the trust accrued in conciliation and that suggestions from a non-aligned source of spiritual legitimacy could be implemented without forfeiting hard-earned positions and respect. In a context void of almost any positive civil society participation the NSCC generated a politically safe open space for greatly needed dialogue and deliberation.

The second significant rationale behind the success of the NSCC’s initiation of the people-to-people peace process relates to the pervasiveness of an open desire for peace by many of the communities. As the collateral damage of the 1991 SPLA split grew increasingly clear and the loss of southern lives dramatically multiplied, war weariness descended on southern Sudan fuelling discontent with the educated southern elite directing the internal attacks coupled with a subsequent desire to reconcile fragmented relationships. This was clearly articulated during the Wunlit proceedings. Dinka Chief Bol Giir Thiik for example decried, ‘why do we struggle for power before we have achieved anything... We went to the bush to fight the enemy, but we have taken the arms we acquired in war against ourselves. We are killing ourselves unnecessarily.’⁶³⁴ Echoing this sentiment one Nuer participant admonished, ‘we civilians, let us separate ourselves from the soldiers, and refrain from looting... Let us stop seeking after cattle, for, if we obtain peace, then we will

⁶³³ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 164. In conflict situations religious actors can ‘[reduce] the vulnerability of rulers and governments on each side to accusations of weakness.’ Edward Luttwak, “The Missing Dimension,” in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 17.

⁶³⁴ Chief Bol Giir Thiik, available from <http://southsudanfriends.org/wunlit/day3.html>; Internet; accessed on 16 November 2007.

have our cattle; we will cultivate and make good use of our land. If conflict continues we will end up with nothing.’⁶³⁵ While the NSCC did not generate the desire for peace, it did shape mechanisms for channelling that desire into concrete actionable results.

Building upon continuity and participation with processes of traditional resolution and capitalising on an inherent longing for reconciliation the NSCC through an initiation of the people-to-people peace process significantly impacted the southern Sudanese road to peace in three predominant ways. First, the peace conventions themselves functioned as an arena of protest and an instrument of grassroots appraisal. Douglas Johnson notes, ‘the process begun at Wunlit has given public opinion a forum in which it can be expressed and brought to bear on local commanders and political leaders.’⁶³⁶ Prior to Wunlit there was little acknowledgment or consultation with grassroots constituencies and creating such a platform forced new directions and agendas within southern Sudan. In the long run the corrective shift initiated at Wunlit and carried by the numerous other people-to-people peace conferences would force a greater commitment on military leaders to pursue peace, remove a layer of insulation from the autocratic tendency of the SPLM/A and empower grassroots civil society as active stakeholders in communal solidarity and the overarching construction of the resolution of the civil war. The majority of the other initiatives directed at addressing these areas in southern Sudan, whether indigenous or international, trace their conceptual and methodological origin to Wunlit, the prior Akobo Peace Conference and the primacy of local church actors. The manner in which this process specifically relates to the more subtle impact of the NSCC on the leadership of the SPLA will be more thoroughly detailed in the proceeding section. In summary however, greater than any other single institution, movement or event in southern Sudan, the people-to-people peace process as conceived and facilitated by the NSCC demonstrates the ‘relinkage of mobilized religion to everyday problem-solving in the context of the pluralistic reconstruction of civil societies.’⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ Chief Charles Reth Kok, available from <http://southsudanfriends.org/wunlit/day5.html>.

⁶³⁶ Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 173.

⁶³⁷ Heinrich Schafer, “New Wars and Religious Identity Politics,” in *Religions Today: Their Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Julio de Santa Ana (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 102.

The second primary impact of the church initiated peace mediation was the enhanced rehabilitation of unity within southern Sudan. With early success much though certainly not all of Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal remained committed behind SPLA leadership. Post 1991 however, support quickly fragmented into competing segments focused on gaining predominance through elimination of potential rivals rather than a joint opposition to the Government of Sudan. The government continually manipulated and extended these divisions as a strategic objective. Prior to Wunlit every attempt, including those pursued by the NSCC, to reconcile the military factions faltered and failed. Wunlit dramatically and permanently altered this alignment as it bypassed military leadership and engineered a peace process secured by grassroots participants committed to its perseverance regardless of the shifting military allegiances. At first it was unclear even to NSCC leadership the extent to which this strategy succeeded. Telar Deng observed, 'the church actually did play a big role. What I am arguing... at the time... I didn't know how powerful you know that influence was... a lot of church people did not know how influential they were as a church. So that was my perspective during the period when I was doing the people-to-people process.'⁶³⁸ Although the NSCC only publicly supported the goals and never outright endorsed the SPLA itself and although some of the individual people-to-people conferences proved only limited in their immediate success, one of the primary results of all of the various conventions taken together was a reuniting of southern Sudan at the grassroots level behind a single cause: self-determination as mediated by the SPLA through the IGAD platform. As is clear in the Darfur conflict, the potential likelihood of political peace primarily internationally negotiated in a context of multiple political goals and agendas remains relatively low.⁶³⁹ The people-to-people peace process instigated and navigated by the NSCC overcame these divisions, unified southern Sudan and substantively furthered the road to peace. Without people-to-people and the mediation of the NSCC it is unlikely that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement would have been signed and though it remains tenuous at best, maintained. The Minister of State for Presidential Affairs South Sudan described, 'Khartoum realised that the southerners are closing ranks and coming politically united with one agenda.

⁶³⁸ Telar Deng, interview with author, 22 March 2006.

⁶³⁹ For a introduction to the Darfur conflict see Julie Flint and Alex de Waal, *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

With one agenda it became a catalyst behind the scenes for the negotiations. That is how one can sum it up, how the people-to-people actually helped.’⁶⁴⁰ That is as the southerners increasingly turned towards the church as a central component of community maintenance and welfare, the NSCC reciprocated as the forefront advocate for southern peace and reconciliation in a methodology that united the grassroots behind the official political participants thereby empowering the efficaciousness of the resultant peace process.

Intricately related to the above, the third impact of the New Sudan Council of Churches people-to-people reconciliation process was the fostering and nurturing of an overall peace conducive environment within southern Sudan. As John Kong observed the, ‘church is the one who brought this peace because in the first place they are the ones who went to different areas in south or in Sudan also to mobilise people about how peace can come to Sudan... After that, they negotiate and [then] the world put his hand on that.’⁶⁴¹ By exerting pressure on SPLA leadership to increase civil society participation and accountability and increasing the reunification of southern Sudan, people-to-people functioned therefore as the bedrock peace platform utilised by IGAD.

Though integral to the construction of the CPA, without the IGAD process it is important to note that it is unlikely that the people-to-people peace events would have ultimately succeeded as a standalone effort. Their primary function was the internal reunification of southern Sudan and an enhanced environment that pressured and expedited political peace. Furthermore within the people-to-people conferences themselves, though perhaps necessary at a political level, the granting of official amnesty to offences committed prior to the convention ensured that the NSCC would be unable to offer rituals addressing the holistic incorporation of a moral responsibility towards the individuals lost during the southern conflict.⁶⁴² It is unlikely that southern Sudan will fully recover from the civil war until a process of

⁶⁴⁰ Telar Deng, interview with author, 22 March 2006.

⁶⁴¹ John Kong, interview with author, 9 February 2006.

⁶⁴² Sharon Hutchinson has noted how some Nuer have tentatively approached the difficult process of reconciling the remembrance of individuals slain during the civil war with the moral mandates of traditional religion, the contemporary setting and the overwhelming burden ensued due to the preponderance of individuals killed. Sharon Elaine Hutchinson, “Death, Memory and the Politics of Legitimation: Nuer Experiences of the Continuing Second Sudanese Civil War,” in *Memory and the Postcolony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power*, ed. Richard Werbner (London: Zed Books, 1998), 58-70.

collective memorialising with established subsequent ethical responsibility occurs.⁶⁴³ Within this arena the absence of church reflection, especially from the NSCC, is lacking and detrimental.

In addition to the above it is noteworthy that in the continuum with traditional peacemaking maintained by the NSCC it is unlikely that reconciliation will remain permanent. Similar to peace mediated in Kakuma Refugee Camp, explored in Chapter Two, resolution addressed unification in the light of a greater common enemy without establishing deeper reflections and bonds that supersede divisive politics of ethnicity. Though it is perhaps difficult to overstate the importance and the positive effects of the people-to-people peace initiatives at every level – politically, socially, economically – and in the furthering of the official peace process leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, it is unclear that negotiated settlements will extend beyond the interim period leading to the vote for self-determination. In many important respects southern Sudan remains tenuously at peace and deeply divided socially and in such an environment it is unfortunate that the NSCC is no longer actively pursuing a mandate of reconciliation. With the signing of the CPA and the cessation of open hostility the NSCC could have transitioned from a reactive response of resolving conflict to a proactive stance of genuine reconciling unification.

Nonetheless, in terms of furthering a beneficial resolution for southern Sudanese in the context of the second civil war, the role of the NSCC in peace mediation was critical. The people-to-people peace process opened venues of accountability and pressure from the grassroots on the SPLM/A, navigated internal southern unification and encouraged an overarching environment conducive to political peace. While the role of Wunlit and the people-to-people peace events has been recognised, the role of the NSCC in instigating and facilitating this process has often been neglected.⁶⁴⁴ For example, Jacqueline Wilson, a Senior Programme Officer with the United States Institute of Peace stated:

⁶⁴³ In addition, the degree to which Christian religiosity is utilised in the process of societal reflection and remembrance will substantively influence the development of a southern Sudanese Christian civil religion.

⁶⁴⁴ As an example of the recognition of the importance of Wunlit and other people-to-people peace initiatives, the European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, an organisation closely aligned to the viewpoint of the government of Sudan, included Wunlit and Liliir as significant brokered agreements. David Hoile, *The Search for Peace in the Sudan: A Chronology of the Sudanese Peace Process 1989-2001* (London: The European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2002).

I don't know the genesis of Wunlit. I mean when I look back on it, it seems like it came from a new tribal communities or the tribal leaders but how they made that leap from fighting against each other to coming together to have a conference you know um, and again at the beginning it sounded like just bringing the Nuer to Dinkaland and ensuring them that they were going to be safe at this conference was a huge achievement and certainly when you look at the distances and the challenges of infrastructure in southern Sudan it, you know it boggles the mind... I mean it is a huge ordeal just to get them to where they were going so that is a major, major accomplishment but I don't know how it started, whose idea it was.⁶⁴⁵

At the same time Wilson also noted that from her perspective the foundation for the CPA '[goes] back to the Wunlit Peace Agreement back in 1999 that brought the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk together. Certainly that agreement... really made it a north-south war and took so much of the south-south issues off the table, [it] was so critical.'⁶⁴⁶

The split of the SPLM/A in 1991 eroded many of the military gains garnered in the civil war by southern Sudanese and threatened to permanently fracture south Sudan in pervasive ethnic warfare. As south-south conflict escalated and thousands of civilians were killed or forced to refuge the New Sudan Council of Churches transitioned from a relief organisation to a movement greatly concerned with the development of southern reconciliation. As the southern community increasingly turned toward the NSCC the council functioned at the forefront of establishing a grassroots mechanism that was built upon traditional approaches and successful in fostering resolution behind the military commanders and political leaders. The reconciliation navigated by the NSCC through the people-to-people peace process provided an impulse for national resolution and a mediatory platform. As Michael Ouko of the NSCC Peace Desk noted:

It provided the foundation for peace... [It] gave a platform where values and principles for true reconciliation and forgiveness were built and therefore relating it now to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, this was based on the same principles. So but you know before people were very adamant and they did not trust among themselves. They were even doubting whether, first of all, to start with the late Dr. John Garang would come together with Machar and they were really doubting about it. But the church opened their eyes that reconciliation and forgiveness is possible. But that one built into another step. Can we talk to our brothers in the north? But remember that it started from a very small level with communities coming together and starting and then they built it up like that. So for us, it was a basic foundation.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ Jacqueline Wilson, Senior Programme Officer, United States Institute of Peace, interview with author, 25 January 2007, Washington D.C.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

B. The NSCC and the SPLM/A

On 28 January 2006 a small quadrant of former SPLA soldiers who had been officially inducted into the newly installed Government of Southern Sudan Army decided without notice to disarm a section of Lou Nuer in Upper Nile.⁶⁴⁸ Local community members perceived the exchange as an attack especially when the soldiers began to physically beat some of the women and children at a water pump for communal failure to produce armaments. The situation quickly erupted as the Lou responded with gunfire and a counteroffensive that left thirty government forces and twelve community members dead. Fearing possible escalation southern Sudanese government officials immediately contacted the PCOS requesting their intervention. Receiving a rapid response grant from PACT-Kenya three PCOS leaders began an arduous journey to reach the area and stress to government officials the inappropriateness of their action for failing to give proper notification after the dry season ended. To the community, the church leaders were to relay that this was an act instigated without oversight and that Lou were not being isolated for further attack. According to Paul Buol it was bad politics, bad decisions and bad leadership that now the church was being called to smooth out.⁶⁴⁹ Though it was not possible to ascertain the result of the PCOS mediation, the above highlights two relevant themes: the reliance of southern Sudanese officials on church leadership as mediators and reconcilers and second, the ability of the church to function as a trusted central conduit of grassroots concerns and pressure on southern military and political commanders. The second section of this chapter will examine the SPLM/A perspective on religion, the turning point in NSCC-SPLM/A relations and an analysis of NSCC influence that will establish the degree to which NSCC diplomacy in relation to the SPLM/A channelled grassroots sentiments, prompted SPLM/A change particularly in connection with John Garang, and thereby influenced communal stabilisation and national resolution.

⁶⁴⁸ The following is based on Paul Buol, pastor of PCOS, interview with author, 29 January 2006, Lokichogio.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.

SPLM/A and the Religious Quandary

Founded in Ethiopia in 1983 under Marxist principles John Garang and the SPLM/A consistently functioned with a secular ideology pursuing a united and democratic secular 'New Sudan.' The aims of the SPLM/A were clearly articulated in a 22 March 1985 speech by Garang:

1. We are committed to the liberation of the whole Sudan, and to the unity of its people and its territorial integrity.
2. We are committed to the establishment of a NEW and *democratic* Sudan in which equality, freedom, economic and social justice and respect for human rights are not mere slogans but concrete realities we should promote, cherish and protect.
3. We are committed to solving national and religious questions to the satisfaction of all the Sudanese people and *within a democratic and secular context* and in accordance with the objective realities of our country.
4. We stand for genuine *autonomous or federal governments* for the various regions of the Sudan.⁶⁵⁰

As a result of this perspective the SPLM/A consistently eschewed the utilisation of religion in the public sphere and sought to incorporate all of the ethnicities and marginalised minorities behind its banner. Though remaining relatively numerically small the SPLM/A did include practicing committed Islamic participants, particularly from the Nuba Mountains.⁶⁵¹ For Nuba who had been previously considered by the Government of Sudan as potential Islamic partners, the result of this allegiance was catastrophic bordering on targeted ethnic cleansing, reinforcing to SPLM/A leadership the critical necessity of curtailing religious identification and cooperation.⁶⁵² As Sharon Hutchinson describes, 'Garang and Machar have been fighting against the fusion of political and religious practices

⁶⁵⁰ John Garang, *The Call for Democracy in Sudan*, with a foreword by Mansour Khalid (London: Kegan Paul International, 1992), 26, italics original.

⁶⁵¹ As a result 'the government started to treat all Muslims in the Nuba mountains particularly those in SPLA controlled areas as rebels fighting against Islam who should be treated as similar to "infidels" or hypocrites who deserved to be killed.' Hunud Abia Kadouf, "Religion and Conflict in the Nuba Mountains," in *Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999*, eds. Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 108.

⁶⁵² According to the social identity theory, 'the judgements of in-group members are more extreme than judgements of out-group members... judgmental extremity is a direction function of the relevance of the dimension of judgement to one's social identity.' Jose M. Marques, "The Black-Sheep Effect: Out-Group Homogeneity in Social Comparison Settings," in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 148-9.

advocated by the national Islamist government in Khartoum. Both men are also intent on undermining, if not destroying, any mediating institutions standing between themselves and the loyalty of their recruits.⁶⁵³

This ideological stance however became increasingly difficult to sustain as the civil war progressed especially after the 1991 fragmentation. At the grassroots level Christian identification was spreading at a rapid acceleration and it carried with it messages of personal redemption and transformation, reinterpreted hope, broader meaning beyond the struggle for a united Sudan, symbols and process of peace, resuscitated patterns of traditional leadership and morality and perhaps most poignant, enacted holistic human rights.⁶⁵⁴ It was impossible for SPLM/A leadership to curb the enthusiastic dissemination of lay evangelists composing songs, planting churches and ministering among SPLA soldiers with prayers for courage and forgiveness. The spread of Christianity implicitly and explicitly challenged SPLM/A practices and ideology. The SPLM/A leadership sought to adapt to this changing situation by in part co-opting and moderating the NSCC with SPLM/A priorities. Dr. Samson Kwaje, a member of the SPLM/A National Executive Council, stated for example, ‘the people of Sudan expect the Church to play a significant role in our present struggle for freedom and justice. One of our immediate problems is the fact that the SPLM does not have public relations offices everywhere to help explain or keep the public aware... The Church can play a big role here by assisting us.’⁶⁵⁵ SPLM/A leadership certainly expected and believed that the NSCC would function as a ‘spiritual wing,’ an auxiliary furthering SPLM aims as directed by the Executive Council.

By the middle of the 1990s however, the NSCC was increasingly crystallising a message of SPLA criticism that deeply resonated with the southern Sudanese populace. SPLM/A leadership came to regard ‘the New Sudan Council of Churches as a competitor, not only among the Southern Sudanese, but also within the

⁶⁵³ Sharon Elaine Hutchinson, “Spiritual Fragments of an Unfinished War,” in *Religion and Conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale, May 1999*, eds. Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2002), 149.

⁶⁵⁴ For an expansion of these themes see Chapters Two through Four.

⁶⁵⁵ Samson L. Kwaje, “Vision, Perspective, and Position of the SPLM,” in *The Sudan at War in Search of Peace* (Consultation Convened by Churches and Christian Councils of the Great Lakes – Horn of Africa Region, Nairobi: Unpublished, 1998), 26, New Sudan Council of Churches Archives, Kampala.

international community. They viewed the NSCC as a haven for dissidents.’⁶⁵⁶ The Director of the NSCC Peace Desk stated:

It was not our view to support the SPLA because even SPLA were committing certain atrocities which were against the NSCC values in human rights. There were some mistakes that were made by the SPLA and we stopped and told the SPLM, “no you are wrong here and this one can’t happen.” So I will say that NSCC of course it valued it [SPLA] being in the southern Sudan and [because] the SPLA was also in the south somebody might conclude philosophically that NSCC was supporting the SPLA but I will argue that in my experience the NSCC was... a credible institution that could not be kept silent on the areas that were being committed by the SPLA because it was from the south. They never did that. Even the problems that were caused by the SPLA they highlighted them.⁶⁵⁷

As the NSCC grew in political clout and capability it intentionally identified with the widespread sentiments of a disenchanted grassroots and channelled those criticisms to the SPLM/A leadership. Despite propaganda attempts by the Government of Sudan and closely aligned external organisations to discredit the NSCC as little more than ‘an apologist’ with a ‘marked reluctance to criticise the SPLA,’ the NSCC while never repudiating the overarching aim and validity of the SPLM, stood as a bulwark against the excesses and abuses conducted by the SPLA.⁶⁵⁸ Over time the NSCC was able to mobilise national and international resources to pressure the SPLA to modify its practices and shift its political aspirations towards the right to self-determination. Criticism created a tense relationship that hardened into mutual respect and shared suspicion. Stephen Tut observed:

The SPLA saw the church as a force to reckon with. They see the church as a body that was more popular than the SPLA. They think the church was not really supportive of the SPLA because of the previous concept of SPLA being a Leninist, being a Communist, being a Socialist. Those differences between them and the church were there. And then there were also some personal differences maybe in the administration of the church and the leadership of maybe the SPLM, John Garang as a person and Haruun [Ruun] as a person in the NSCC... Also it could be rivalling of the leadership of whom each of the parties between the church and the SPLA was trying to get the community behind them. You see? The church was rallying the people behind it, the SPLA was thinking people must rally behind it including the church, because they wanted the church to come under them and not live independently.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁶ Oystein H. Rolandsen, *Guerrilla Government: Political Changes in the Southern Sudan during the 1990s* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2005), 131.

⁶⁵⁷ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁶⁵⁸ “Prolonging Conflict and Division in Sudan?,” available from http://www.espac.org/sudan_euro/voice_hope.asp.

⁶⁵⁹ Stephen Tut, Acting Director of the Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, interview with author, 18 January 2006, Nairobi.

Throughout the early and mid 1990s the SPLM/A rebuffed efforts by the NSCC and other church organs to attempt to mediate reconciliation between the SPLA and other military factions. Similar to other African governments, the SPLM/A viewed civil society institutions, particularly the NSCC, 'warily as political challenges... (1) because they constitute a network of resourceful organizations that are growing more autonomous of the state, and (2) because they have the potential to change state-society relations.'⁶⁶⁰ Recognising the limitation of a strained relationship Haruun Ruun shifted NSCC policy during 1995-1996 and transitioned from encouraging reunification between the SPLA and other military factions to reconciliation between the NSCC and the SPLA. Though Garang sought to undercut these efforts, growing estrangement between the SPLA and the general southern Sudanese populace and mounted grassroots pressure eventually forced Garang to accept the NSCC overtures for dialogue. This reversal in policy would mark a turning point in NSCC-SPLA relations, increase NSCC political access and authority and influence future peace developments.

The Yei Dialogue

Particularly after the 1991 split the SPLA increasingly found itself on the opposite side of popular sentiment. Fighting a number of aggressive though un-decisive campaigns that at times resembled little more than ethnic retaliations, dissatisfaction with the SPLA permeated large swaths of southern Sudan. Ruling by military decree while promoting and promising democratic governance the SPLA was resistant to criticism and change. Stephen Tut for example levelled:

People were frightened. You can't say anything about the administration of the SPLA. You can't say anything about the SPLM. You can't say anything about the human rights record. And that was false, you see? If you came up to liberate the people you are liberating them because they were not getting their rights otherwise you are liberating them out of what? Out of injustice. And when you are liberated you must lead by example, you must show the example that there must be justice for all. And the SPLA was not seen that way. They were seen well, there were some inhumane practices, and then there were some injustices in the movement but [they say] let us wait until after the liberation is over and then those things, those questions can be raised. You don't wait for human rights... Even they went as far as some people were shot, they were [shot by] firing squad, and when somebody raise his hand and say I have a complaint, they say... later on you can raise your complaint. If you have

⁶⁶⁰ Stephen N. Ndegwa, *The Two Faces of Civil Society: NGOs and Politics in Africa* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996), 22.

been shot dead how do you raise your complaint after death and you are dead? That was the approach of the SPLA.⁶⁶¹

Another group of undisclosed political opponents charged that in the SPLA, ‘everybody is prohibited from moving from place to place. No freedom of speech. Justice and equality are absolutely alien to the movement. There is widespread imprisonment and killing without trial. The running of the affairs in the movement is based on his whims.’⁶⁶² Though frustration was rampant throughout southern Sudan, it was particularly present in Equatoria.

During Anya-Nya I, the first civil war, the region of Equatoria fielded some of the most committed and vociferous political and military combatants. Disillusioned by the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and the subsequent political jockeying much of Equatoria remained deeply sceptical of John Garang and the SPLA based in Ethiopia. Throughout the early and mid 90s as the SPLA expanded its reach and capacity, in Equatoria it frequently found itself forced into positions of occupation rather than liberation. Andrew Onziga voiced the view of many Equatorians driven into Ugandan refuge, ‘the Sudanese refugees in West Nile took refuge here because of atrocities of SPLA. Some of them have never seen an Arab. Some are right here because the SPLA looted their property, they raped their girls, killed their sons... They will be sincere to tell you that they hated SPLA.’⁶⁶³ Another pastor in the area noted that indeed Equatorians, ‘they hate the movement.’⁶⁶⁴

Recognising the untenable nature of this position and the growing importance of the NSCC, John Garang reluctantly agreed to a dialogue 21-24 July 1997 in Kajiko, Equatoria. Acting as chairman of the Dialogue ECS Archbishop Joseph Marona reflected on the convening of the meeting:

There were so many disagreements. The church was against what they [SPLA] were doing of robbing people, killing people, burning houses and so on, like raping and all this. So the church stood against these acts. So they found it difficult and they said unless we come together with church leaders and talk together we may look at each other as enemies.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶¹ Stephen Tut, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁶⁶² *The Diseases that Ail the SPLM/A by a Group of Former Political Detainees* (unpublished, 2002), 34-5, University of Durham.

⁶⁶³ Andrew Onziga, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁶⁶⁴ Mullai Ishmael Roman, Baptist pastor, interview with author, 13 April 2006, Adjumani.

⁶⁶⁵ Joseph Marona, Archbishop of ECS, interview with author, 11 March 2006, Juba. For a broader perspective of Marona’s initial approach to the Archbishop see Joseph Marona, “My Vision for the

During the proceeding, grassroots constituents, church leaders and members of the SPLA were given a neutral space to safely voice criticisms and experienced atrocities. One of the participants recounted:

Commanders were there... and people talked openly to them because this is now an issue of life and death. Please if you continue with this your government will not be accepted by the people. You are meant to serve these people and you cannot run around and become the enemy of the people. Some of these people have never seen the Arab and have never seen the evils of the Arab. They have only seen the evils of the SPLA. They were told right in front to the commanders. They were given details, examples, this thing happened here involving so and so and so and so. People have died here, people have been raped, others have been tied on trees and died on the tree and so on. These are done by the SPLA... You commanders, people hate you because of these things. People hate SPLA because of these things... You better change.⁶⁶⁶

Archbishop Marona remarked, 'I told Garang, I told him that we have come together to talk about unity, loving ourselves, to become one to work together. Without church the movement will find it difficult but if we work together it will be good.'⁶⁶⁷

Haruun Ruun offered a lengthy rumination on the rationale behind the NSCC's instigation of the Yei Dialogue and the context of the meeting itself:

Some people thought I was crazy and mad. And I said no, but some people did not see it because the grievances and the division and the hatred was so deep people did not believe it would work. So we pushed for it and indeed Garang was against it very much. He did not want it. But... very reluctantly he agreed. So we said okay if you do it you will have to come to the south and open it if you cannot stay for the whole thing. It was another hurdle but at last he agreed to come... At the beginning it was tough because the meeting started and the movement came in with armed soldiers. So between every two people there was a soldier with a gun so people felt intimidated. We went to Garang and [said] this may not be of help because we want reconciliation and many people cannot speak then we are not going to negotiate with him. To his credit he said fine and the next day there were no soldiers around with guns... The meeting started and because of tension and bitterness and so forth they were hesitant about who should start. They said let the church people start and the church people said let the movement start. But after awhile the church people stood up and they gave their grievances... And at the end they [the SPLA] got up actually, they got up and also they gave their own side of the coin. You as a church yes what you are saying is true. Women are being raped, people are getting killed and church leaders have been mistreated and so forth but we [were] never taught as teachers the moral thing because you as the church that is your responsibility. Our soldiers should be taught by you, but you know that we are more of a tribal church. Everybody lines up with his own tribes... You have never had a moral standing. Anyway on and on, to make a long story short, in the end they said fine what do we do now?... Let us have a distribution of trust. We as a movement of course we are on our own we will continue to fight. And you as a church take responsibility to reconcile,

Next Century," in *"But God is Not Defeated!" Celebrating the Centenary of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, 1899-1999*, eds. Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 42-7.

⁶⁶⁶ Andrew Onziga, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁶⁶⁷ Joseph Marona, interview with author, 11 March 2006.

reconcile our people. That was the point when we started to turn to the people and the grassroots.⁶⁶⁸

At the end of the conference the NSCC and the SPLM/A signed a joint declaration that served as an official rapprochement between the two movements.⁶⁶⁹ Specifically, in the Yei Declaration the SPLM/A endorsed the NSCC as the prime agency for internal southern mediation and reconciliation.⁶⁷⁰ It furthermore requested that the churches provide itinerant chaplains to travel with the soldiers of the SPLA. Although it certainly did not overcome the immense suspicion that had been generated, the Yei Dialogue allowed the SPLM/A to clear the air, rehabilitate its image and begin a process of increasing support throughout Equatoria that was, for example, politically and militarily sealed in the Nairobi Declaration on Unity between the SPLM/A and the Equatoria Defence Force in 2004.⁶⁷¹ In many important respects the Yei Dialogue allowed freedom of speech among the general population for the first time, provided an opening for civil society to engage the SPLM/A, enabled a process of internal reconciliation led by the churches and confirmed that the NSCC was the prime conduit for the application of grassroots pressure on the leadership of the SPLM/A.

The Yei Dialogue marked a turning point in the relationship between the New Sudan Council of Churches and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army and yet even still, following its conclusion their relationship remained at best tenuous. Friction remained between the NSCC and SPLA over perceived roles and expectations in addition to complaints of abuse. The SPLA expected the church to mimic the role of religion in the north – supportive with strong international financial links – while the NSCC expected greater inclusion of civil society and the immediate implementation of democracy and good governance by the SPLM. Though Garang

⁶⁶⁸ Haruun Ruun, interview with author, 22 March 2006. See also New Sudan Council of Churches, *Inside Sudan*, 49-50.

⁶⁶⁹ For a copy of the Yei Declaration and the most important recounting of the Dialogue see New Sudan Council of Churches, *Come, Let Us Reason Together: Report of the Historic Dialogue Held Between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC)* (Nairobi: Africa Church Information Services, 1998).

⁶⁷⁰ Hadley Jenner, "Reflecting on Peace Practice," 18. The SPLA appreciatively recognised the role of the NSCC in promoting mediation as early as 1994, "A Major Watershed: SPLM/SPLA First National Convention Resolutions, Appointments and Protocols" (Chukudum: Sudan People's Liberation Movement, 1994), 16.

⁶⁷¹ Mullai Ishmael Roman, interview with author, 13 April 2006. See also "Nairobi Declaration on Unity between the SPLM/A and Equatoria Defence Force," *South Sudan Post* 3-4 (March 2004): 25.

had authorised the Yei Declaration calling on the NSCC to engage southern reconciliation endeavours, as was demonstrated in the first section of Chapter Five he personally resisted Wunlit and the proceeding people-to-people peace initiatives.

The NSCC continued to develop and exert its own authority especially as it related to functioning as a reflective source of critical accountability to the SPLM/A. Responding to a query regarding their relationship, Joseph Marona stated, ‘I cannot tell you the right thing why they [SPLM/A leaders] have recognised the church leaders because church talks to them courageously. Don’t do this, don’t do this, do that, love the people, you have taken arms to protect them. But if you mistreat them, kill them, then the taking arms to protect them will be meaningless.’⁶⁷² Joseph Marona, Haruun Ruun, Matthew Mathiang Deang, Telar Deng and many of the other prominent church leaders were granted personal access to Garang and his closest advisors and regularly utilised that ability to convey messages of personal accountability and immediate implementation of human rights and good governance.

At an institutional level the NSCC continued to advocate and press for a broader inclusion of civil society in the governance of south Sudan and the negotiation of a north-south peace agreement even when this was in direct opposition to the SPLM/A. For example in June 2001 the NSCC convened a consultation dubbed Strategic Linkages in Kisumu, Kenya that though boycotted by the SPLA, ‘involved a broad spectrum of civil society, politicians, intellectuals and traditional leaders’ in which the NSCC ‘asserted its independence from the SPLA, and participants called for its continued role as they forged agreement around a political agenda for the south largely focused on self-determination.’⁶⁷³ The following year the NSCC in cooperation with the SCC coordinated a similar civil society forum drawing over one hundred participants with an aim ‘to deliberate on priorities and practices for promoting good governance and reconciliation to achieve a just and lasting peace for



Figure 24 – ECS Archbishop Joseph Marona

⁶⁷² Joseph Marona, interview with author, 11 March 2006.

⁶⁷³ *God, Oil and Country: Changing the Logic of War in Sudan* (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2002), 140.

Sudanese peoples.⁶⁷⁴ Though the NSCC was certainly not alone in organising conferences and deliberations on expanding the internal participation of civil society, in southern Sudan it was the most consistent and predominant actor.⁶⁷⁵

Interestingly, as Christian communal identification accelerated, the NSCC grew in authority and legitimacy and as his contact with international church representatives increased, John Garang appears to have undergone a personal transformation and re-evaluation of Christianity. As one noted anthropologist observed, ‘it is worth mentioning that John Garang, who was a committed secularist at the start of the war [in 1983], has reportedly been combing the Bible in recent years in the hope of divining the war’s outcome.’⁶⁷⁶ With a prophetic overtone, in his speech at the official signing of the CPA at Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi in 2005 John Garang stated:

I want in conclusion to quote, in terms of this inclusiveness, the gospel according to St John, that says in St John Chapter 14, Verse 1 and 2: Do not be worried and upset, Jesus told them, believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my father’s house and I’m going to prepare a place for you. I would not say [it] if it were not true. So I say to all southern Sudanese on the occasion of this signing of this comprehensive peace agreement, that there will be many rooms in an SPLM-based government in southern Sudan and all are welcome.⁶⁷⁷

The inclusion of the above scripture in Garang’s speech was repeated during interviews by a number of individuals on multiple occasions and certainly highlights the overarching influence of a nascent southern Sudanese civil religion and the deep impact of Christianity on the consciousness and politics of the leader of the secularly defined Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army.

⁶⁷⁴ “Advisory Statements in the Context of Machakos Protocol” (Sudan Civil Society Forum on Good Governance and Reconciliation, Entebbe: Unpublished, 2002), 1, Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

⁶⁷⁵ Other organisations involved in this area include for example, the Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, the Sudanese women’s association Voice of Peace and PACT-Kenya.

⁶⁷⁶ Sharon Elaine Hutchinson, “Spiritual Fragments of an Unfinished War,” in *Religion and African Civil Wars*, 40.

⁶⁷⁷ “Garang’s Speech at the Signing Ceremony of S. Sudan Peace Deal,” *South Sudan Post* 1 (January 2005): 23.

Analysis and Conclusion

The New Sudan Council of Churches consistently engaged in direct diplomacy with the leadership of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in order to voice important criticisms, support the expansion of civil society and advocate for measures of human rights, good governance and peace building. Despite claims to the contrary the NSCC did not shy from highlighting grievances committed by the SPLA and encouraged SPLM democratic governance in the liberated areas. In this way the NSCC served as a source of accountability mirroring popular sentiment and forcing the SPLM/A to change and adapt to southern political demands and aspirations.

Significantly this disapproval of the SPLM/A as expressed by the NSCC was articulated in a context of autocratic military control. Especially in the early years of the civil war the SPLA did not hesitate to imprison or otherwise detain political dissidents including church leaders. As Christianity grew in importance the outright targeting of church leaders diminished and in general, the NSCC was able to moderate some of the more repressive tendencies of the SPLA leadership. At the same time the NSCC was unable to establish complete independence. A working relationship and at least tacit approval from the SPLA was imperative to the establishment of NSCC people-to-people peace initiatives. Even after the Yei Dialogue direct confrontation required tact and a certain amount of diplomacy. For example Archbishop Joseph Marona commented that in conversations with Garang he frequently couched his criticism in Biblical stories and language:

I said enough is enough because the blood of the innocent people are shedding a lot. The earth is complaining. The earth is complaining because the war is fought. I talk to him about Abel and Cain that very simply, Abel was killed by his brother but God knew. When God knew that Cain had killed Abel he said even if he was afraid of denying it God said the blood of your brother is complaining to me. It was difficult to hide it. So I told him these difficult stories in the Bible.⁶⁷⁸

The NSCC and representative church leaders had to sustain a careful balance between maintaining institutional independence and corresponding capabilities to offer meaningful criticism without completely alienating SPLM/A leadership.

⁶⁷⁸ Joseph Marona, interview with author, 11 March 2006.

The NSCC was effective in retaining this delicate balance by in part transcending individual political parties and ideologies. The NSCC never denied the right of the SPLA to militarily stand for marginalised Sudanese or to advocate for a greater political inclusion of southern Sudanese at the national level. In particular the NSCC lamented the split of the southern resistance movement in 1991 and despite its own complaints, refused to endorse or shift support to other political factions. The NSCC envisioned that southern political reconciliation would occur under the banner of the SPLM and consistently worked accordingly. The at least implicit support of the aims of the SPLM/A is clearly seen in the ambivalent name of the NSCC. The overarching political goal of the SPLM was the creation of a 'New Sudan.' In this context it is equally possible to read the name of the southern Sudanese council of churches as either the 'New' Sudan Council of Churches or as the 'New Sudan' Council of Churches.

The relationship between the NSCC and the SPLM/A remained somewhat ambiguous. While the SPLM/A resisted efforts by the NSCC to expand its agenda and thereby encroach on its political terrain, the NSCC refused to directly and ultimately repudiate the SPLM/A as a movement or outright endorse its propositions or behaviour. As the SPLA sought to establish military control and victory the NSCC worked to ensure that SPLM political governance achieved the aim of democracy it espoused, that southern Sudan would remain united so as to increase the potentiality of a beneficial national resolution, the influence and role of human rights and civil society was expanded in order to facilitate communal stability and that the SPLM would maintain an active engagement with efforts of peace mediation.

Although the NSCC sought to broaden 'the movement' to include civil society partnerships it is important to note that in this respect the NSCC was only partially successful. The NSCC convened a number of conferences, actively promoted an ecumenical networking among various members of civil society and worked to rehabilitate traditional patterns and processes of governance. These endeavours resulted in a deepening consciousness among southern Sudanese about the legitimacy of human rights and the desirability for democracy that in itself was an implicit challenge and resistance mechanism to the SPLA. With communal stability benefits at the grassroots level, these initiatives did not however result in an institutional re-ordering as clearly seen in the exclusion of civil society participants from the IGAD peace agreement.

More efficacious, the NSCC stood as a bulwark against SPLA abuses and excesses, identified with grassroots sentiments and concerns and through effectively conveying that perspective pressured the SPLA to pursue peace. Michael Ouko of the NSCC expounded:

You know that what they were addressing they were not cooking these things. These things were being reported by the people themselves. The church was there, was seeing these things, and reporting those things to the NSCC. So it was not the NSCC imagining what was happening. So we could tell them [the SPLA] this is the letter, there was even proof these are the core issues we are receiving from the people so you have to stop it... So, that's why the SPLM also found it very difficult to challenge the NSCC because these issues were very genuine.⁶⁷⁹

For southern Sudanese the most important concern was the establishment of political peace and towards this end NSCC facilitation was effective in two primary ways.

First, as the people-to-people peace process galvanised support and resolution at mid and grassroots levels, pressure was applied on John Garang and the elite echelon to accept political reconciliation with other southern factions. As one scholar noted, 'the "people-to-people" peace process contributed considerably to the peace agreement between John Garang and Reik Machar in early 2001.'⁶⁸⁰ Matthew Mathiang Deang described, 'unity within the SPLM was brought about by all these small conferences.'⁶⁸¹ At the Nuer Fangak Peace Conference regarding John Garang and Reik Machar it was declared, 'the merger between the two movements was in fact a great achievement to all peaceful initiatives carried out in the past by the NSCC with its partners and will pave ways for the future peace dialogues at grassroots as well as at the political levels.'⁶⁸² Garang had resisted all attempts at reconciliation with Machar and it was ongoing NSCC pressure that finally created an environment conducive to facilitating the reunification of their two respective movements. Though the merger of their forces remained fragile the reconciliation increased the military capacity of the south, especially in the area of the oil fields.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁹ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁶⁸⁰ Oystein H. Rolandsen, *Guerrilla Government*, 131.

⁶⁸¹ Matthew Mathiang Deang, interview with author, 24 January 2006.

⁶⁸² New Sudan Council of Churches, "Report on the Fangak Peace Conference," 14.

⁶⁸³ International Crisis Group, "Capturing the Moment: Sudan's Peace Process in the Balance," *Africa Report* 42 (April 2002): 2, available from http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400604_03042002.pdf; Internet; accessed on 28 November 2007.

Furthermore, it enabled the SPLM to stand as the representative of south Sudan, united around definitive and concrete desires and therefore capable of implementing a peace agreement negotiated with the Government of Sudan. The unity of the SPLM/A during the final stages of the IGAD peace process was critical and much of that unity rested on a framework erected and pushed by the NSCC.

Second and directly related to the above, NSCC pressure ensured that John Garang would legitimately pursue peace through the IGAD process. Garang and other elite military commanders had a vested interest in continuing to wage war until a military victory could be assured, a possibility with only a dim potentiality. The NSCC conveyed to John Garang the deep war weariness of south Sudan, the growing disillusionment of military strategies enacted by the SPLA and the need to remain at the negotiating table. As one individual observed, 'you know turning somebody to see the evils of war and to see those atrocities as an evil and begin to search for a different way is a very difficult thing to do.'⁶⁸⁴ The NSCC focused on dialogue, negotiation and reconciliation and pressured the SPLM/A to utilise these measures as primary strategies. The NSCC viewed the IGAD securing of peace through arbitration an ultimate vindication especially as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement included a protocol resisted by John Garang and the international community but vociferously advocated by the NSCC: the right to self-determination. The manner in which the NSCC pressured both the international community and John Garang to include this right in the CPA will be explored in the following chapter. Though Sudanese government officials and external groups frequently called on Garang 'to think of peace,' the NSCC as an internal southern agency deeply connected to the southern populace carried a tremendous political currency and utilised that currency to press for commitment to the IGAD peace process with the implicit threat of grassroots realignment.⁶⁸⁵ It is important to note that thus far research has primarily focused on the influence of the church on elite SPLM/A leadership. It is unclear the extent to which the NSCC, local churches or individual chaplains influenced or modified local formations of the SPLA. More research is needed in this area. At an elite level, however, NSCC acted as an important and unparalleled central conduit of grassroots pressure on the SPLM/A leadership, challenged and influenced John

⁶⁸⁴ Andrew Onziga, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁶⁸⁵ Sean Gabb, "Why Not Peace? An Open Letter to Dr John Garang and the SPLA" (London: The Sudan Foundation, 1999), 1, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Garang, supported the political reunification of southern military factions and mobilised commitment for the IGAD peace process. As the Director of the University of Juba Centre for Peace and Development described, ‘the church had much role to do in pushing pressure on the SPLA.’⁶⁸⁶

As disillusionment with the SPLA deepened and the capacity of the NSCC grew, the southern Sudanese grassroots increasingly turned towards the NSCC with complaints and criticisms. By the end of the 1990s the NSCC had crystallised its political objectives, developed a message of peace that resonated with the majority of southern Sudan and was functioning as the primary internal agent for change in relation to the SPLM/A. Though the NSCC remained relatively small in terms of personnel and did not have the resources of government offices or military factions, the ability of the NSCC to flexibly identify itself with multiple ethnicities and constituencies enabled the council of churches to develop political clout and pressure on the basis of a unifying mobilisation and alignment of southern Sudan.⁶⁸⁷ That is the NSCC strategically initiated a partnership with mid-level leaders that saw the rehabilitation of that leadership within traditional structures and the ethnic reconciliation of the grassroots populace and utilised the re-engendered unification as a tool of applied pressure on the elite leadership of the SPLM/A. In this way the NSCC stood at the forefront of organising southern reconciliation and was the central custodian for advancing civil society, advocating for human rights and good governance and applying elite pressure on the SPLM/A to pursue peace. As one southerner commented, ‘the church set the ground for the change of mind from war to peace.’⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁶ Abednego Akok Kacuol, Director of University of Juba Centre for Peace and Development, interview with author, 25 March 2006, Khartoum.

⁶⁸⁷ According to the social identity theory, for minority groups ‘flexibility... promotes effective influence, due to the interplay of overlapping category memberships.’ Juan A. Perez and Gabriel Mugny, “Minority Influence, Manifest Discrimination and Latent Influence,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, eds. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 154.

⁶⁸⁸ Andrew Onziga, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

Chapter Six

International Advocate: The New Sudan Council of Churches and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

‘Christians say they are away from politics but in my opinion I think God is the first politician.’

James Rout Wour⁶⁸⁹

‘The church is an indigenous body there but its voice can be made louder if it is in partnership with other churches internationally.’

Andrew Onziga⁶⁹⁰

Representative of the majority of southern Sudanese one Nuer pastor responded to a question regarding the importance of peace-building in the mission of the church, ‘I think reconciliation first is the most important... You cannot preach to them when they are quarrelling... You cannot tell them before they have peace in their hearts.’⁶⁹¹ The New Sudan Council of Churches reflected this grassroots sentiment stating that their goal was ‘to strive to bring about reconciliation, justice, and lasting peace in the Sudan ensuring stability and enhancing justice in economic, social, religious, and political establishments through peoples’ participation, lobbying and advocacy work.’⁶⁹² As was demonstrated in Chapter Five the NSCC employed two efficacious internal strategies to help facilitate and expedite the political peace process. First, the NSCC stood at the forefront of initiating partnerships with traditional mid-level leaders, re-engaging their communal authority and organising grassroots reconciliation and participation through the people-to-people peace process. Second, the NSCC functioned as the central conduit through which a reunified southern Sudanese populace lobbied and exerted pressure on the

⁶⁸⁹ James Rout Wour, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

⁶⁹⁰ Andrew Onziga, interview with author, 12 April 2006.

⁶⁹¹ David Ibon, interview with author, 17 January 2006.

⁶⁹² Sudan Council of Churches and New Sudan Council of Churches, “Sudanese Churches Peace and Advocacy Strategic Plan 1999-2001,” a paper presented at the Sudan Ecumenical Forum (Geneva: Unpublished, 1999), 1, University of Durham Sudan Archive, Durham. The University of Durham houses the largest Sudanese archival collection in the United Kingdom.

elite leadership of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army to implement practices of good governance, reconcile with other military factions and legitimately pursue negotiated peace with the Government of Sudan. There was however a third strategic tool utilised by the NSCC in furthering the peace process: international advocacy.

In Addis Ababa in 1972 it was the Sudan Council of Churches partnered with the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches that organised, facilitated and brokered the peace agreement ending Anya-Nya I, the first civil war. Thirty years later in Sudan the churches were no longer in a position to directly engage in a political brokering of a north-south peace agreement. Recognising the opportunity offered in international solidarity, particularly as related to the maintenance of a sanctioned peace process that could direct significant pressure towards both the SPLA and the Government of Sudan, the NSCC pursued beneficial international partnerships with regional governments as well as those in Europe and America, NGOs and church actors. Chapter Six will focus on international advocacy, the third strategy utilised by the NSCC. Specifically, this chapter will explore the relationship between the NSCC and the regionally based Inter-Governmental Authority on Development peace process, European and American involvement, the inclusion of the right to self-determination in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and an analysis of the overall impact of the NSCC on the peace process. Coupled with reconciliation and internal SPLA pressure, the efforts of the NSCC to stand behind international advocacy campaigns proved critical to facilitating the road to Sudanese peace.

Regional Advocacy: The NSCC and The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Peace Process

In 1986 the governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda decided to develop a regional approach for addressing the persistent problems of drought and desertification dubbed eventually the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).⁶⁹³ Recognising that issues of food scarcity is

⁶⁹³ Originally the regional working group was known as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification and focused on 'emergency drought relief measures... medium-term programmes

particularly relevant in contexts of political instability and regional insecurity, in 1993 an IGAD sub-committee on Sudan was initiated and tasked with facilitating a regionally sanctioned peace process amenable to both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A.⁶⁹⁴ In 1995 the United States (US) government arranged a western support group for IGAD comprising the governments of the US, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands and known initially as the ‘Friends of IGAD’ and after 1997, the IGAD Partners Forum.⁶⁹⁵ After securing an initial breakthrough in 1994 with an agreed Declaration of Principles (DOP) by both the SPLM/A and the Sudanese government, the IGAD peace process lay fairly dormant and ineffective until 2002.⁶⁹⁶ With the appointment of Kenyan General Lazaro Sumbeiywo as the Special Envoy for Sudanese Peace, a renewed engagement by the United States⁶⁹⁷ and a more conducive southern Sudanese political and peace-building context due to the reunification and internal lobbying advanced by the NSCC, in 2002 dialogue commenced in the Kenyan town of Machakos reached a ‘remarkable breakthrough’ in the stalled peace process.⁶⁹⁸ Two years later in Naivasha a final peace protocol was signed that incorporated multiple security and political arrangements between the SPLM/A and the Government of Sudan paving the way for an official Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed 9 January 2005.⁶⁹⁹

for drought recovery and... long-term programmes which are meant to guide socio-economic development of the subregion.’ Ali Ahmed Saleem, “An Introduction to IGADD,” in *Beyond Conflict in the Horn: The Proposals for Peace, Recovery and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan*, eds. Martin Doornbos, Lionel Cliffe, Abdel Ghafter M. Ahmed and John Markakis (The Hague: The Institute of Social Studies, 1992), 114.

⁶⁹⁴ Samson Kwaje, “The Sudan Peace Process, From Machakos to Naivasha,” in *African Regional Security in the Age of Globalisation*, ed. Makumi Mwangira (Nairobi: Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2004), 97.

⁶⁹⁵ Hans Van de Veen, “Sudan: Who Has the Will for Peace?,” in *Searching for Peace in Africa: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Management Activities*, eds. Monique Mekenkamp, Paul Van Tongeren and Hans Van de Veen (Utrecht: European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, 1999), 171.

⁶⁹⁶ Tabitha Jeptoo Seii, “The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Sudanese Peace Process,” in *Sudan Peace Process: Challenges and Future Prospects*, eds. Korwa G. Adar, John G. Nyuot Yoh and Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2004), 15.

⁶⁹⁷ Ways in which the renewed interest of the United States directly relates to NSCC advocacy will be explored in the second section of this chapter.

⁶⁹⁸ Francis Deng and Mohamed I. Khalil, *Sudan’s Civil War: The Peace Process Before and Since Machakos* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2004), 10.

⁶⁹⁹ The protocols incorporated into the CPA include the Machakos Protocol (July 2002), Agreement on Security Arrangements During the Interim Period (September 2003), Agreement on Wealth Sharing During the Pre-Interim and Interim Period (January 2004), Resolution on the Conflict in southern Kordofan, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States (May 2004), Resolution of the Conflict in

Though the signatories of the CPA included only those of the SPLM and the Government of Sudan, reflective of their primacy in the actual negotiations, IGAD as a process was impacted by the NSCC in four important ways. First, NSCC advocacy maintained contact with the governments of Kenya and Uganda in order to press for their ongoing commitment to the IGAD peace forum. Father Joseph Garzi the Catholic Bishop of Tambura and Yambio described how the churches initially engaged in this process:

We sent a delegation to the United Nations in America. We sent two Bishops with our letter of appeal that the war should end, that they should stop the war. And Boutros Boutros Ghali who was back then the Secretary told our Bishop if it is a question of religious persecution in the Sudan you better go to Rome and tell the Pope, don't tell me. This is none of our business. Or otherwise if you want to talk about this go back to Sudan and get in touch with the government of the borders neighbouring you and then convince them to take up your case. They can be the one that can bring it to the United Nations, not the church leaders. So this is how we linked up. When we came in and told them [the governments of Kenya and Uganda] then they worked out to make that IGAD process.⁷⁰⁰

In 1992 or 1993 Garzi and a member of the ECS visited President Museveni in Uganda and with the Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCKK), on two separate occasions Garzi visited with President Moi of Kenya. In his meeting with President Museveni Garzi communicated:

His county is full of us, the refugees... Has he ever gone to the camp to see what is happening there and how much our people are suffering? Does he not get very concerned about this?... It might affect his country also adversely, why not do something about it? So in fact he said, "Okay, I will see my colleague the President of Kenya and then we shall see what can happen." And that is how they brought in the other [IGAD].⁷⁰¹

Though it is hyperbolic to claim sole credit in instigating the shift in IGAD methodology from drought and desertification to peace building, churches did maintain regular contact with governmental leaders in Kenya and Uganda lobbying them for support and involvement and were certainly an important force in enlisting Ugandan and Kenyan peace mediatory participation.⁷⁰² A statement prepared by the

Abyei Area (May 2004), Power Sharing (May 2004), and Naivasha (June 2004). For a more comprehensive overview of the IGAD process see Ruth Iyob and Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 101-132.

⁷⁰⁰ Father Joseph Garzi Abangi Dei, Catholic Bishop of Tambura and Yambio, interview with author, 9 March 2006, Yambio.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Despite querying a number of individuals, political observers and IGAD participants, none claimed to understand the shift in IGAD away from drought and desertification to peace building or who or what initiated that change, a transformation that did occur in 1992-93.

Kenyan Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed the importance of NSCC involvement stating:

We are grateful for the assistance the Church has provided from relief and rehabilitation to development, education and some aspects of governance. We urge you to continue with the participatory grassroots peace keeping models... We take note of the Churches' concern towards the peace process especially that the DOP should be the foundation of negotiations. It is particularly important that the Church has recognised the need for humanitarian access to marginalised areas and the importance of projects of mine awareness and demining. This acknowledgement has greatly enhanced the role of the Church as the sub-region intensifies efforts for peace.⁷⁰³

The above statement highlights three related areas of important influence: the role of the NSCC in grassroots reunification and peace building, the ability of the churches to convey to outside institutions the needs and humanitarian access points of south Sudan and the churches' commitment to advocating for a peace process that forced both parties to build upon already agreed principles instead of allowing either participant to renege and negotiate an initial starting point more to its particular ideology or benefit. Lasting over a decade the IGAD peace process required encouragement with regional governments needing ongoing pressure in order to ensure their participation. Lobbying conducted by the NSCC in Uganda and Kenya substantively helped ensure the critical involvement of their respective governments in addition to an overarching commitment by all interested parties to maintain as the basis for negotiation the DOP, an agreement only hesitantly accepted by both the SPLM and the Government due to its inclusion of a mandated southern Sudanese right to self-determination. With strong links to both the grassroots of south Sudan and to neighbouring church institutions the NSCC consistently worked to lobby and encourage regional accountability and participation in the IGAD peace process.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰³ “Statement by the Kenya Minister of Foreign Affairs’ presented by Sheldon S. Muchilwa, MP, Assistant Minister Foreign Affairs, Republic of Kenya,” in *The Sudan at War in Search of Peace* (Consultation Convened by Churches and Christian Councils of the Great Lakes-Horn of Africa Region, Nairobi: Unpublished, 1998), 15, New Sudan Council of Churches Archives, Kampala.

⁷⁰⁴ Though more research is needed it is probable that the NSCC was influenced by actions and decisions taken by the NCCK in the early 1990s. For more on the role of the NCCK in the transition to Kenyan democracy see Galia Sabar, *Church, State and Society in Kenya: From Mediation to Opposition, 1963-1993* (London: Frank Cass, 2002); B. A. Ogot, “Transition from Single-Party to Multiparty Political System, 1989-93,” in *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93*, eds. B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng’ (London: James Currey, 1995), 239-61; Samuel Kobia, *The Quest for Democracy in Africa* (Nairobi: National Council of Churches of Kenya, 1993). For a more general overview of the role of the various churches in the building of African democracy see as one example Isaac Phiri, *Proclaiming Political Pluralism: Churches and Political Transitions in Africa* (Westport: Praeger, 2001).

Second, as was more fully explored in Chapter Five, the NSCC helped empower the effectiveness of the IGAD process by facilitating an environment conducive to peace building within south Sudan. The IGAD Secretariat for Peace in Sudan recognised the importance of conducting grassroots consultation with the southern Sudanese population in order to incorporate their perspective into the process. Though IGAD did host several grassroots conferences towards this end they were unable to organise regular or geographically diverse grassroots conventions. Instead following one such commissioned endeavour in 2001 it was recommended to the IGAD Secretariat in a section on ‘strengthen[ing] southern unity,’ that IGAD ‘conduct more agreements like Wunlit, as a starting point for broader unity’ and ‘strengthen and encourage the “people to people’s peace process.”’⁷⁰⁵ The report also recommended that IGAD international partners ‘increase the capacity of NSCC’ in order ‘to ensure that churches are involved in peace negotiations in the refugee camps and in Sudan.’⁷⁰⁶ That is IGAD recognised the importance of the people-to-people process as the basis for generating both southern unity and peace with the Government of Sudan and due to the geographical diffusion of the church, an instrument of greater connectivity and participation. In the midst of a ‘forgotten war’ the IGAD Forum directly relied upon the NSCC to establish southern peace and reunification.⁷⁰⁷ Even the Government of Sudan recognised the importance of the NSCC in empowering a southern Sudanese environment conducive to peace building as explicitly evidenced in an official statement from Sudanese Ambassador David de Chand:

We would like to appeal to IGAD and the Church to remain firm and continue to assist the people of Sudan to achieve peace. We know the Church can play a major positive role in creating a conducive atmosphere to the parties to the conflict so that trust and confidence prevail. The Church has done it many times before and it is our belief that it can do it again in Sudan.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ Paul Murphy, “‘Even the Meeting Trees are Perishing:’ Planning for Peace in Sudan, A Grassroots Consultation Commissioned by the IGAD Partner’s Forum” (Nairobi: Unpublished, 2001), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ Steven Livingston, “Suffering in Silence: Media Coverage of War and Famine in the Sudan,” in *From Massacres to Genocide: The Media, Public Policy, and Humanitarian Crisis*, eds. Robert I. Rotberg and Thomas G. Weiss (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1996), 72.

⁷⁰⁸ David de Chand, “Statement of the Government of the Sudan,” in *The Sudan at War in Search of Peace* (Consultation Convened by Churches and Christian Councils of the Great Lakes-Horn of Africa Region, Nairobi: Unpublished, 1998), 31, New Sudan Council of Churches Archives, Kampala.

Third, invested with religious symbols and authority in a context of nascent civil religion, the involvement of the NSCC in the IGAD process as official observers granted the endeavour a greater sense of validity for many southern Sudanese. One group of scholars claimed, ‘the NSCC, merely by its existence and its presence and moral support for the peace talks, gave a legitimacy to the process that would not otherwise have existed.’⁷⁰⁹ In addition to its religious overtones the NSCC conscientiously sought to broaden and represent civil society as a whole. In a context devoid of most opportunities for participation or even the development of civil society, the inclusion of the NSCC in its presence and advocacy stood for a commitment to negotiated resolution and the necessity for building support and incorporation of civilian, non-military sources.⁷¹⁰ As the Speaker for the Parliament for the State of Western Equatoria noted, the ‘church was meeting at high levels making pressure on the two governments and even IGAD. I could say that the church played a very high level.’⁷¹¹

Fourth, international NSCC advocacy helped secure the ongoing engagement of European and American IGAD partners, involvement that was critical to the securing of political peace. Responding to what caused the participation of the Government of Sudan in the IGAD peace talks former Member of Parliament Thomas Melut described, ‘the international pressure. The international pressure realised that the war you see [would] not end unless of course the Government of Sudan and the rebels under John Garang were pressured to talk peace.’⁷¹² Knowing that ‘in addition to their own solidarity, a decisive expression of solidarity from others... becomes a critical step,’ the NSCC established international focal points through which they channelled relevant information to both partner churches and

⁷⁰⁹ *Great Expectations: The Civil Roles of the Churches in Southern Sudan*, 35.

⁷¹⁰ As all of the primary negotiating parties in IGAD stemmed from backgrounds of securing power through violence and/or military intervention the utilisation of sustained diplomacy was itself an important step for the region. For more on the development of democracy in Africa see Marina Ottaway, *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

⁷¹¹ Speaker of the Parliament, State of Western Equatoria, interview with author, 9 March 2006, Yambio.

⁷¹² Thomas Melut, interview with author, 16 March 2006.

respective governments.⁷¹³ With intimate involvement in both the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement and the contemporary SCC context Samuel Nwaylo Ador stated:

The churches were more proactive [this time] than they were in 1972. I am not diminishing the role the church played in 1972 but I am putting it into context. But in the 1972 context it was the World Council and the AACC and the Sudan Council of Churches, okay. We did not have missions going out to African countries to advocate on behalf of Sudan. There were no missions to the Arab world as we did this time. There were no missions to Europe as we did also during this period... There was much more work done this time by the churches to push the two sides to the roundtable to talk peace.⁷¹⁴

In addition to the regular disbursement of information through the various focal points the NSCC sought to promote international involvement in securing Sudanese peace in a variety of governmental outlets and relationships. For example, 'in March 1993, Bishop Macrom Max Gassis, the Bishop of El-Obeid, addressed the UN Commission on Human Rights, giving an account of human rights violations and religious discrimination and calling upon the international community to take a more active role and work towards putting an end to the regime's violations.'⁷¹⁵ In 1999 the NSCC claimed that the Executive Secretary developed advocacy relationships with US Senator Bill Frist, Advisor to the White House John Prendergast, the US Agency for International Development, British Charge D'affaires in Khartoum Bill Ridout, the British Foreign Office in London, UN Special Envoy to Sudan Tom Vraalsen, and the Ambassadors from Switzerland and Norway.⁷¹⁶ The combination of these various advocacy endeavours according to Bishop Daniel Deng was that 'the church was involved this time to push the two parties to come to negotiation together with the other parties like IGAD and European Union and America.'⁷¹⁷

Involvement of international partners was critical to the establishment of peace through the IGAD process as stated by Matthew Mathiang Deang: 'this peace

⁷¹³ Beatriz Manz, "Fostering Trust in a Climate of Fear," in *Mistrusting Refugees*, eds. E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), 162-3. One of the most active European focal points was in Germany under Marina Peter. The most important collection of pertinent documents is John Ashworth, *Five Years of Sudan Focal Point Briefings* (Pretoria: Sudan Focal Point-Africa, 2004).

⁷¹⁴ Samuel Nwaylo Ador, Director of SCC Church and Society Department, interview with author, 26 March 2006, Khartoum.

⁷¹⁵ Kevin Boyle and Juliet Sheet, eds., *Freedom of Religion and Belief; A World Report* (London: Routledge, 1997), 75.

⁷¹⁶ New Sudan Council of Churches, "New Sudan Council of Churches Annual Report 1999" (Nairobi: New Sudan Council of Churches, 1999), 7.

⁷¹⁷ Daniel Deng, ECS Bishop of Renk and Chairman of Justice and Peace Commission, interview with author, 28 March 2006, Khartoum.

came because of influence of the international community, the Americans, the Norwegians, the British.’⁷¹⁸ International engagement ensured that pressure would be applied to the Government of Sudan to negotiate the CPA in good faith. Dr. Taib Hag-Atia noted, ‘they [the Government] are clear enough to see that they should engage in negotiations and they hoped that the negotiations will go on forever. And it could have been, it could have gone on but for IGAD and the friends of IGAD and everybody who pressured them and pushed them to sign it.’⁷¹⁹ The NSCC understood that applying legitimate pressure on the Khartoum government was beyond their capacity and that governmental agreement would occur only if backed by the application of international pressure. The NSCC therefore worked to facilitate awareness about the situation of southern Sudan and through advocacy convince international governments to sanction or otherwise pressure the Government of Sudan. In this respect NSCC strategy was largely successful. Political observer Dr Abednego Akok Kacuol claimed that the Government of Sudan agreed to the CPA primarily because of international involvement, ‘the Government found out that there was no other outlet unless they sign peace agreement with the SPLA to relieve them from the international pressure. There was no other card to use only to sign peace. Otherwise they were going to suffer from the international sanctions proposed.’⁷²⁰ Another group of scholars observed, ‘contributing to the peace momentum was the passage of the Sudan Peace Act by the US Congress in October 2002... The Sudan Peace Act afforded more sticks than carrots to the Sudanese government. While keeping up the pressure, however, it also held out the possibility of the normalization of relations.’⁷²¹ The NSCC understood that international pressure was critical to ensuring good faith participation by the Government of Sudan and therefore viewed international advocacy at both regional and European and American levels as a key component to securing the establishment of peace.⁷²²

⁷¹⁸ Matthew Mathiang Deang, interview with author, 24 January 2006.

⁷¹⁹ Taib Hag-Atia, interview with author, 29 March 2006.

⁷²⁰ Abednego Akok Kacuol, interview with author, 25 March 2006.

⁷²¹ Ruth Iyob and Gilbert M. Khadiagala, *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace*, 122.

⁷²² Beyond the scope of the thesis, for more on the governmental approach to the peace process see Hassan E. El-Talib, “Sudan Government and the Peace Process,” in *Sudan Peace Process: Challenges and Future Prospects*, eds. Korwa G. Adar, John G. Nyuot Yoh and Eddy Maloka (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2004), 22-36.

It is important to note that during the negotiations of the CPA the NSCC was present as observers, not participants. The NSCC was not involved in direct mediation between the SPLM and the Government of Sudan. The influence of the NSCC on the IGAD process was more indirect and multidimensional. Though the CPA only included the signatures of the SPLM and the Government of Sudan it was a regionally organised process that was successful due to augmentation by both internal Sudanese developments and external governmental support.⁷²³ The NSCC recognised the importance of both of these venues and to varying degrees of success stood behind peace building and advocacy endeavours in both of these areas. From the very beginning it was the New Sudan Council of Churches and related church bodies that pushed the governments of Kenya and Uganda to establish an acceptable venue for peace negotiations. The NSCC continued to lobby these governments, extol the importance of IGAD and channel information either directly or through established focal points to an international audience. Re-engagement of the United States after 2001 greatly strengthened the legitimacy and potentiality of the IGAD process and was itself the result of collaborative international church partnerships advanced in part by the churches of south Sudan.

International Advocacy: The NSCC and United States Involvement⁷²⁴

In a high rise building in downtown Washington D.C. Ezekiel Gatkuoth, the Head of the Government of Southern Sudan Mission to the United States commented, ‘President Bush was pretty strongly involved with this [peace]... He was very much involved because he was mobilised by the Christian community here in the US.’⁷²⁵ Gatkuoth continued that it was the NSCC that stood behind the mobilisation of US constituencies on behalf of south Sudan: ‘the [Sudanese] church

⁷²³ ‘Experience shows that sub-regional organizations need backing from regional organizations, just as regional organization initiatives need global organization support.’ I. William Zartman, “Parameters of Mediation and Negotiation,” in *Their Brothers’ Keepers: Regional Initiative for Peace in Sudan*, ed. Francis M. Deng (Addis Ababa: Inter Africa Group, 1997), 62.

⁷²⁴ Analysis focuses on the involvement of the United States for two specific reasons. First, the US was the predominant and most influential international actor in securing the IGAD peace process. Second, international advocacy conducted by the NSCC received its fullest and greatest political impact in the US.

⁷²⁵ Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, Head of the Government of Southern Sudan Mission to the United States, interview with author, 25 January 2007, Washington D.C.

played a role in keeping the faith and also in mobilising the Christian community to let them know that we do have a problem in the south.⁷²⁶ US involvement post-2001 was critical to the signing of the CPA and reflected a substantive change in approach to Sudan. This shift and re-engagement of US policy developed predominately from the merging of a broad based US coalition that was itself a partial extension of NSCC international advocacy.⁷²⁷

Throughout the 1980s out of Cold War security concerns the United States ‘invested heavily’ in the Government of Sudan giving over \$1.5 billion to the government.⁷²⁸ Following the 1989 regime change and the advent of the National Islamic Front, however, US policy shifted towards isolation and containment. The Clinton administration primarily relied upon a policy of international sanctions⁷²⁹ that hindered Khartoum but failed to ‘significantly weaken’ the NIF’s grip on power or the civil war.⁷³⁰ After initially following a similar course the attack on 11 September 2001 opened President George W Bush to a divergent course.⁷³¹ Sensing an important political opportunity for improving its image and financial capability

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ For a comprehensive analysis of the history and foreign policy implication of this US coalition see the groundbreaking work, Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

⁷²⁸ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (London: Free Press, 2006), 358.

⁷²⁹ For more on the US Sudanese sanctions, Meghan L. O’Sullivan, *Shrewd Sanctions: Statecraft and State Sponsors of Terrorism* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 233-83. For the UN approach to sanctions see Mohamed Ezzeldine Abdel-Moneim, “The Global Environment and the Use of Sanctions: Current International Thinking and UN Practice,” in *New Tools for Reform and Stability: Sanctions, Conditionalities and Conflict Resolution*, eds. Greg Mills and Elizabeth Sidiropoulos (Johannesburg: The South African Institute of International Affairs, 2004), 25-36.

⁷³⁰ Francis M. Deng and J. Stephen Morrison, “U.S. Policy to End Sudan’s War: Report of the CSIS Task Force on U.S.-Sudan Policy,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (February 2001): 6. David Hoile dubbed the Clinton approach as a ‘failure’ and ‘farce.’ David Hoile, *Farce Majeure: The Clinton Administration’s Sudan Policy 1993-2000* (London: The European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2000). Aligned with the Government of Sudan, Sean Gabb derided that Clinton’s policy was at best nothing more than a ‘diversion’ to the Monica Lewinsky scandal and was at worst ‘hostility to Sudan’s Islamic model.’ Sean Gabb, “Why Has Britain Supported American State Terrorism against Sudan? Where is the Evidence? An Open Letter to the British Prime Minister, Rt Hon Tony Blair MP” (London: The Sudan Foundation, 1998), 6, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; Sean Gabb, “Why Do You Continue Fighting? An Open Letter to Dr John Garang” (London: The Sudan Foundation, 1998), 3, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

⁷³¹ Prior to the 11 September 2001 attack organisations sympathetic to the Sudanese government dismissed accepting increased American involvement, “US Catholic Bishops on Sudan: A Response” (London: European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2001). For a broad historical overview of US involvement in the Horn of Africa see Ugboaja F. Ohaegbulam, *U.S. Policy in Postcolonial Africa: Four Case Studies in Conflict Resolution* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 89-111.

the Government of Sudan almost immediately volunteered information regarding Osama bin Laden and began to cooperate closely in the area of terrorism while at the same time, President Bush ‘developed a policy of supporting a negotiat[ed] settlement of the North-South conflict.’⁷³² Building upon an emerging evangelical engagement with US foreign affairs and latent Wilsonian tenets upholding an intentional spread of American democratic values, two primary groups converged to force President Bush to adopt a strong position of pursuing a negotiated peace through the IGAD forum.⁷³³ Both of these groups at least indirectly connected with NSCC international advocacy.

Based primarily in the Washington D.C. area the first group was a loose association of individuals connected to various think tank organisations such as the Institute on Religion and Democracy and the Hudson Institute. Though a number of individuals were involved three stand out as predominant: Nina Shea, Michael Horowitz and Faith McDonnell. Connected to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, Shea maintained close contact with the Sudanese Catholic Bishop Macram Max Gassis who throughout the 1990s resided in the US due to Sudanese governmental targeting, his vocal opposition to the government and his consistent access to brief key church and governmental leaders in the US about the Sudanese situation.⁷³⁴ Intrigued by the lack of awareness surrounding Christian persecution Horowitz, a practicing Jew, began researching and ‘realised that Sudan was the worst place where any Christian persecution was taking place with the worst

⁷³² Gerard Prunier, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 2005), 88. US policy has continued to follow a careful path of seeking to force the Khartoum regime to pursue and implement negotiated peace throughout Sudan while at the same time preventing outright condemnation or alienation in order to quietly partner with the Government of Sudan for counter-terrorist information and operations. For example, while maintaining sanctions on the Government of Sudan the US government relied on ‘Sudan’s *Mukhabarat* intelligence service to insert spies into Iraq’ in order to assemble ‘a network of informants in Iraq providing intelligence on the insurgency.’ “Sudan Helps US Spying in Iraq: Report,” *Associated Free Press*, 11 June 2007, available from www.sudan.net; Internet; accessed on 25 June 2007.

⁷³³ For more on the intersection of Wilsonian ideals, evangelical concerns and American foreign policy see Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Century Foundation Books, 2003), 56-98; Walter Russell Mead, “God’s Country?” *Foreign Affairs* 58, no. 4 (September/October 2006): 24-43; Elizabeth G. Ferris, “The Churches, Refugees, and Politics,” in *Refugees and International Relations*, eds. Gil Loescher and Laila Monahan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 159-77; Tony Smith, “National Security Liberalism and American Foreign Policy,” in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, eds. Michael G. Cox, John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 85-102.

⁷³⁴ See for example www.bishopgassis.org; Internet; accessed on 4 December 2007.

excesses of radical Islamic violence and fascism were manifest.’⁷³⁵ That is, Horowitz’s advocacy involvement stemmed in part from a deep motivation to specifically help and redress the plight of Christians in south Sudan whom he viewed as the principal representatives of a broader phenomenon. McDonnell had the deepest and most consistent connection to church leaders in south Sudan and founded the US based Church Alliance for a New Sudan.

Around 1997 Shea, Horowitz and McDonnell began to build a coalition that regularly met to generate strategies that would shift US policy towards engaging a negotiated peace process for southern Sudan.⁷³⁶ Over the next eight years the coalition grew to include evangelical Christians, leaders of the African American community, Jewish leaders, and both republican and democratic congressional representatives. The US Consul General in Juba described the coalition as ‘strange bedfellows’ that remained divided on every issue ‘except the Sudan.’⁷³⁷ The coalition engaged in a variety of activities ranging from media publications and corrections,⁷³⁸ testifying at congressional hearings,⁷³⁹ generating letters to Presidents Clinton and Bush,⁷⁴⁰ facilitating student conferences, organising protest rallies,

⁷³⁵ Michael Horowitz, Senior Fellow of Hudson Institute, interview with author, 22 January 2007, Washington D.C.

⁷³⁶ Faith McDonnell, Director of the Religious Liberty Programs and the Church Alliance for a New Sudan at the Institute on Religion and Democracy, interview with author, 23 January 2007, Washington D.C.

⁷³⁷ Robert E. Whitehead, Consul General of the United States, Juba, interview with author, 13 March 2006, Juba.

⁷³⁸ For example Michael Horowitz responded to a 28 November 1999 New York Times article by Jane Perlez that he found ‘profoundly troublesome’ offering a divergent point of view and a list of possible contacts knowledgeable on the Sudanese situation. Michael Horowitz to Jane Perlez, 29 November 1999, Electronic Mail, transcript, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C. Horowitz dispatched via fax and email numerous articles and relevant information to ensure that the coalition was abreast of current developments. In one such email for example Horowitz called on church delegations to join him at a protest rally at the State Department where he would be arrested. Michael Horowitz to Sudan Coalition, 1 February 2000, Electronic Mail, transcript, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷³⁹ Many of these hearings specifically called attention to elements of southern Sudanese Christian persecution and relied on information obtained from southern Sudanese church leaders. For example, Nina Shea, “Testimony on the Sudan Section of the Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom” (Washington D.C.: Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 16 May 2000), available from www.uscifr.gov/events/cong_testimony/2000/may/05162000_SFRC_shea.html; Internet; accessed on 4 December 2007.

⁷⁴⁰ Sudan Coalition to President William Jefferson Clinton, 9 December 1999, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.; Sudan Coalition to Honorable George W. Bush, 19 November 2001, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C. Over one hundred prominent leaders signed both of these letters.

encouraging divestment campaigns and orchestrating the passage of the Sudan Peace Act signed into law 21 October 2002.⁷⁴¹ Within these activities, there were three important ways in which the coalition was impacted by advocacy advanced by southern Sudanese churches.

First, southern Sudanese church leaders were heavily involved in personally lobbying congressional representatives and key US Christian leaders. It is important to note that though NSCC strategy proposed such activity, limited resources meant that Sudanese were often reliant upon hosting by international partners. In this respect the Institute on Religion and Democracy was critical in helping facilitate congressional visits by a number of Sudanese church leaders including NSCC co-founder Episcopalian Bishop Nathaniel Garang, Reverend John Dau, Episcopalian Bishops Boulin Dali and Peter Mundi, Telar Deng of the NSCC peace desk, and Catholic Bishop Paridi Taban.⁷⁴² Reflecting on the importance of these visits in securing US support Faith McDonnell concluded:

I think it is very important. I think that the members of Congress and the members of the administration needed to hear from people from the area to know what was really going on. I know that it has been very helpful in getting hearings on Sudan. And over the years you know we will have a meeting and a Congressman and a Senator will say well we need to have a hearing on this and then it happens and that leads to other things... So I think the church and the people of Sudan played a very important role.⁷⁴³

Ezekiel Gatkuoth, the chief representative of the government of southern Sudan in the United States confirmed the above stating, 'Bishop Paridi Taban he is a very influential person. He is a Catholic person. And there is Nathaniel Garang, he is an Episcopal Bishop. They are very influential people. They have friends like Faith McDonnell who is also connected here in Washington... Without her I don't think we would be here.'⁷⁴⁴ Given the proclivity on Capital Hill to perceive African affairs as relatively unimportant, in this area 'the potential for influencing Congress is especially great.'⁷⁴⁵ The NSCC and connected church leaders exploited this opening

⁷⁴¹ The key to the Sudan Peace Act was a provision that 'if, after six months, the president certified that the Sudanese government was not negotiating in good faith or was obstructing humanitarian relief efforts, he was empowered to impose sanctions on Khartoum and give assistance to the SPLM.' Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History*, 597.

⁷⁴² Faith McDonnell, interview with author, 23 January 2007.

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Ezekiel Gatkuoth, interview with author, 25 January 2007.

⁷⁴⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 42.

pressing for US involvement and lobbying for negotiated peace favourable to southern Sudan.

Second, in addition to advocacy visits church leaders were afforded opportunities to officially submit their positions through congressional hearings. For example on 27 May 1999 Mark T Ajo presented a highly personal account stating, 'my own sister Mary and her daughter Pierina died from starvation. My nephew Philip died at the hands of the government forces together with hundreds of other southern civil servants. We were never given Philip's remains to see and bury with dignity according to our tradition.'⁷⁴⁶ Ajo continued, 'I am therefore appealing to you the leaders and government of this blessed, powerful nation to help us in our struggle for survival and faith.'⁷⁴⁷ In a February 2000 hearing Bishop Macram Gassis, who several years earlier had been the first person to ever testify before the US Commission on International Religious Freedom,⁷⁴⁸ commented, 'I have tried time and again to tell the world that the National Islamic Front regime in Khartoum has been and is conducting a campaign of genocide aimed at exterminating the Christian, African, and non-Arab populations of Sudan in order to establish a uniform Arab-Islamic fundamentalist free state in the heart of Africa.'⁷⁴⁹ Gassis concluded, 'come and save us. We are not asking you to carry our cross. Each person has to carry his own. We are asking you only to help us carry it.'⁷⁵⁰

Third, understanding the critical importance of communication southern Sudanese churches helped supply consistent firsthand information that the US coalition relied upon.⁷⁵¹ For example in September 1999 Michael Horowitz enclosed

⁷⁴⁶ Mark T. Ajo, "Crimes Against Humanity in Sudan" (Washington D.C.: Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 27 May 1999), 8, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁴⁸ Allen Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, 248.

⁷⁴⁹ Bishop Macram Max Gassis, "Hearings on Religious Persecution in Sudan: Bishop Macram Max Gassis Oral Testimony," (Washington D.C.: United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 15 February 2000), available from www.uscirf.gov/events/hearings/2000/february/panel1/02152000%5Fgasses%5Fforal.html; Internet; accessed on 4 December 2007.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ For more on the importance of media in influencing policy decisions see Fred H. Cate, "Communications, Policy-Making, and Humanitarian Crises," in *From Massacres to Genocide: The Media, Public Policy, and Humanitarian Crises*, eds. Robert I. Rotberg and Thomas G. Weiss (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1996), 15-44.

in an email to the Sudan coalition an ‘Appeal of the Catholic Bishops of Eastern Africa for Peace in the Sudan’ that denounced specific Sudanese governmental actions and called on the international community to ‘take decisive measures to put an effective end to the war’ and ‘fully support the IGAD Forum.’⁷⁵² Though church sources were certainly not the only place members of the coalition received information, churches consistently funnelled pertinent information pressing for the US furtherance of the Sudan peace process facilitated by IGAD.⁷⁵³ The coalition directly linked with NSCC peace participation advancing through Senator Sam Brownback’s office a bill that increased funding the US Agency for International Development granted to the people-to-people peace process.⁷⁵⁴ Together the US coalition and NSCC church advocacy worked to secure US involvement forcing ‘both the executive, especially the State Department and the White House, and the legislative branches of the US government to pressure the government of Sudan to improve the human rights situation, grant humanitarian access to famine-stricken areas, and to seek peace in good faith.’⁷⁵⁵ As Faith McDonnell stated, ‘we’ve worked with a lot of the leadership of the New Sudan Council of Churches. We’ve tried to publicise things that they have done. For instance, I think the New Sudan Council of Churches played a major role in the reformation as it were of the SPLA.’⁷⁵⁶

Overlapping with the above was a second group representative of the widespread concern for south Sudan carried by the US grassroots populace: The Ministerial Alliance of Midland, Texas. Hometown of President George and Laura Bush, Midland is a mid-size community in West Texas with an economy heavily based on oil. Reflecting an active spirit of ecumenism the Ministerial Alliance involved Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian and Episcopalian

⁷⁵² Michael Horowitz to Sudan Coalition, 23 September 1999, Electronic Mail, transcript, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷⁵³ College professor Eric Reeves was also heavily relied on to research and report relevant facts. As a result Reeves came under criticism from sources sympathetic to the Government of Sudan, see “Smith College, Eric Reeves and Sudan: What Price a Reputation?” (London: European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2001); “Eric Reeves, Sudan, Elvis and Alien Abductions: A Study in Flawed Methodology” (London: European-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, 2001).

⁷⁵⁴ Faith McDonnell, interview with author, 23 January 2007.

⁷⁵⁵ Jok Madut Jok, *Sudan: Race, Religion, and Violence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 254.

⁷⁵⁶ Faith McDonnell, interview with author, 23 January 2007.

churches meeting regularly for prayer and Bible study.⁷⁵⁷ The Secretary of the Alliance was Deborah Fikes and in 2001 Fikes was selected to organise the national observation of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church slated to meet that November in Midland. Through this effort Fikes was introduced to Faith McDonnell who with deep ties to the churches of south Sudan convinced Fikes to get involved in pressing for southern Sudanese peace.⁷⁵⁸ Fikes in turn convinced the Alliance, which without any real concrete connections decided ‘to stand with the



Figure 25 – Oil Rig outside Midland, Texas

people in southern Sudan [and] the church in southern Sudan.’⁷⁵⁹ Members of the Alliance began flying to Washington D.C. and arranging meetings with the State Department and the Sudanese Embassy quickly transitioning into a key ally in the peace process. At the same time Deborah and her husband Stan built a relationship with a Sudanese Episcopalian Bishop who helped connect Fikes to SPLA leader John Garang and IGAD negotiator Lazaro Sumbeiywo. Throughout the following two years Fikes received regular private updates from church sources inside of south Sudan, Garang and Sumbeiywo⁷⁶⁰ that provided details utilised by the rest of the US coalition.⁷⁶¹ The Midland Alliance generated a widely circulated open letter to the Government of Sudan delivered through the Sudanese Embassy,⁷⁶² private

⁷⁵⁷ Jerry Max Hilton, former pastor of First Presbyterian and President of the Midland Ministerial Alliance, interview with author, 12 January 2007, Midland, Texas.

⁷⁵⁸ Deborah Fikes, former secretary of Midland Ministerial Alliance, interview with author, 12 January 2007, Midland, Texas.

⁷⁵⁹ Jerry Hilton, interview with author, 12 January 2007.

⁷⁶⁰ Sumbeiywo not only offered regular updates about IGAD he passed to the Alliance personal and private prayer requests. Sumbeiywo also utilised information garnered from the US coalition to strengthen his negotiating position including meetings with US Special Envoy John Danforth. Lazaro Sumbeiywo to Deborah Fikes, 21 July 2003, Electronic Mail, transcript, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷⁶¹ Deborah Fikes, interview with author, 12 January 2007.

⁷⁶² Ministerial Alliance of Midland, Texas Open Letter to the Government of Sudan, 7 March 2003, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C. The Embassy responded via letter stating, ‘propaganda is a feature of all conflicts, and particularly civil war... Please take the time to listen to both sides in what is a very complicated situation and accept our invitation to visit our country.’ Ambassador Khidir Haroun Ahmed to Ministerial Alliance of Midland, Texas, 16 April 2003, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C. In addition, when the Vice President of Sudan visited the US he personally telephoned Jerry Hilton as a ‘courtesy call.’ Jerry Hilton, interview with author, 12 January 2007.

correspondence with First Lady Laura Bush⁷⁶³ and communication to John Garang regarding the need for the SPLM to legitimately pursue a negotiated settlement.⁷⁶⁴ Garang appears to have developed a special rapport with Deborah Fikes sharing prayer requests with her and visiting her in her home in Midland. The Ministerial Alliance gave a Life Application Bible to Garang with his name engraved on the cover that found its way to Garang's hotel room during the Naivasha peace talks and according to Fikes:

[Garang] was not a choirboy... But I really believe that something happened in John Garang's personal life. And the day he was killed in the helicopter crash, the day he died... I received an email from him... It said Dear Sister Deborah I wanted to thank you for all your prayers for me, my wife, our country and I wanted you to know that I used the Bible that you gave me at the [Vice Presidential] inauguration, love John.⁷⁶⁵

Proving a critical component to engaging US involvement in Sudan, Deborah Fikes in particular and the Ministerial Alliance in general were impacted by southern Sudanese church advocacy in two important ways.

First, the Ministerial Alliance utilised southern Sudanese church leaders to convey private diplomatic messages to and from John Garang. Deborah Fikes for example noted to Michael Horowitz:

Our director, the Bishop, from Sudan is staying with us while in the States and he will deliver a message to Dr. Garang for us on some suggestions for the current status of the north/south agreement... The Bishop gave me some very good information and said our approach would work and he would share it with Garang ASAP. I will give you more details later and just keep it quiet for now. The Bishop told me once again how our letter to Garang had saved the day at that time in the peace negotiations.⁷⁶⁶

The Alliance also received information that was generated and communicated by southern Sudanese church leaders to Sumbeiywo such as a meeting in June 2003 where church leaders met with Sumbeiywo and pressed him on several points related to IGAD negotiations including security arrangements during the interim period, status of *sharia* in Khartoum, issues regarding Abyei, Nuba Mountains and Southern

⁷⁶³ In one such letter the Alliance concluded 'we pray that you would allow God to use you in a mighty way to change the course of history in southern Sudan.' Ministerial Alliance of Midland to First Lady Laura Bush and President George W. Bush, undated, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷⁶⁴ For example the US coalition reminded Garang 'that failure of the negotiations on grounds that leave room to assign blame for the failure on the SPLM could sharply undermine our capacity to maintain the support of the administration and the United States Congress on your behalf.' Sudan Coalition to John Garang, Este, Spring 2003, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷⁶⁵ Deborah Fikes, interview with author, 12 January 2007.

⁷⁶⁶ Deborah Fikes to Michael Horowitz, 20 September 2004, Electronic Mail, transcript, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

Blue Nile, power sharing, wealth sharing, the interim constitution and government and the right to southern Sudanese self-determination.⁷⁶⁷ Second, as is illustrated in the above, the Midland Alliance relied on Sudanese church leaders as sounding boards to test strategic propositions and garner accurate and detailed information about the situation in south Sudan.

Thus far analysis has primarily focused on the role of church advocacy within the United States but often international lobbying occurred closer to home. For example, ‘on his pastoral trips to Sudan’ Bishop Macram Gassis personally took ‘religious leaders, human rights activists, and congressional staff members, flying into unsecured areas under threat from attack by Khartoum military.’⁷⁶⁸ In 1992 it was an invitation from the New Sudan Council of Churches that first brought the NGO Christian Solidarity International to Sudan and convinced its Director John Eibner of ongoing slave abductions.⁷⁶⁹ Christian Solidarity International quickly became the most prominent advocacy group working on behalf of slave redemption and generated an immense amount of international media attention on behalf of south Sudan. In addition, on a number of occasions the NSCC received various delegations including arranged meetings with the US Special Envoy on Sudanese Peace.⁷⁷⁰ The NSCC also built bilateral relationships with embassies based in Kenya and with various organisations working for their respective governments.⁷⁷¹ For example before the US Institute of Peace had any local partners or representatives attached to Sudan, the Director had already met southern Sudanese religious leaders and established contact with the NSCC.⁷⁷²

US involvement as an active IGAD partner was critical to the signing of the CPA and despite claims to the contrary was not merely an extension of US oil exploration politics.⁷⁷³ Engagement stemmed from a much more personal

⁷⁶⁷ Deborah Fikes to Michael Horowitz, 26 June 2003, Electronic Mail, transcript, Hudson Institute Archives, Washington D.C.

⁷⁶⁸ Allen Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, 247.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid., 250. Christian Solidarity International, a religious human rights NGO focused on encouraging religious freedom, was one of the earliest and most prominent publishers of information sympathetic to south Sudan. See www.csi-int.org; Internet; accessed on 20 February 2008.

⁷⁷⁰ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁷⁷¹ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 25 January 2006.

⁷⁷² Jacqueline Wilson, interview with author, 25 January 2007.

⁷⁷³ At the time rather, ‘due to ongoing American sanctions, the United States [had] no current investments in Sudan.’ Randolph Martin, “Sudan’s Perfect War,” *Foreign Affairs* 81 (March/April

commitment by President Bush who appointed close friend and well known ordained Episcopalian priest John Danforth as Special Envoy. President Bush's commitment was a result of a broad based coalition that coupled Washington based activists with grassroots concerns most especially from the Ministerial Alliance of Midland, Texas. Though it would be an overstatement to credit the development of this coalition solely to the NSCC, at the same time the US coalition was deeply influenced, motivated and informed by southern Sudanese church leaders. Equally important although the NSCC as an organisation had a policy of international advocacy and was directly engaged in such activities much of the lobbying conducted in the US was enacted by individuals affiliated but not directly employed by the NSCC as an institution. The NSCC did not so much generate international developments as it stood behind a vigorous campaign to forge relationships, increase awareness, disseminate information and lobby for active international involvement in the IGAD peace process. In this context the NSCC strategy was highly successful.

In general, NSCC benefited from a civil war oversimplified and 'portrayed in the Western media as a struggle between Islam and Christianity'.⁷⁷⁴ That is Christians in southern Sudan came to symbolically embody advocacy on behalf of 'persecuted Christians' even when US activists had little actual connection to southern Sudanese Christians. Specifically, NSCC and southern Sudanese churches functioned as a critical channel of reliable information to international audiences, testified before US Congressional committees, personally visited and lobbied church and congressional leaders and helped connect John Garang and Lazaro Sumbeiywo to key international partners. The NSCC therefore stood behind a third efficacious strategy – international advocacy – that sought and engaged American involvement in order to provide an impetus to the IGAD peace process and secure external pressure on the Government of Sudan ensuring negotiation in good faith, particularly as related to the southern Sudanese right to self-determination. As Head of Mission to the US Ezekiel Gatuoth responded to a query regarding the importance of the church in the Sudanese peace process, 'the church, I would put them on the top of the

2002): 126. For more on the production of oil in Sudan see Jemera Rone, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*; Peter Nyot Kok, "Adding Fuel to the Conflict: Oil, War and Peace in the Sudan," in *Beyond Conflict in the Horn: The Proposals for Peace, Recovery and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan*, eds. Martin Doornbos, Lionel Cliffe, Abdel Ghafter M. Ahmed and John Markakis (The Hague: The Institute of Social Studies, 1992), 104-12.

⁷⁷⁴ Sean Gabb, "Why Britain Should Support the Peace Process in Sudan" (London: The Sudan Foundation, 1997).

list. Because they did very, very wonderful. But also the army did very wonderful and the international community did very well. I think all of them are equal. They have played their role, they have played their role.’⁷⁷⁵

Comprehensive Peace Agreement Advocacy: The NSCC and the Right to Self-Determination

As has been illustrated the NSCC and affiliated southern Sudanese churches stood behind international advocacy campaigns that influenced the IGAD peace process as well as the engagement of the United States. Though the NSCC and broader elements of civil society were excluded from the negotiations of the CPA there is one area where NSCC’s consistent lobbying directly intersected with the CPA over and against the misgivings of the SPLM/A and the United States: the southern Sudanese right to self-determination (RSD).⁷⁷⁶

Prior to 1997 the Government of Sudan had rejected all endeavours for southern determination insisting on a united Sudan federally governed. In 1997 however, in order to secure a settlement with Reik Machar with an aim of undermining and ending the predominance of the SPLA the Government of Sudan ‘for the first time in history, publicly committed itself to the principle of self-determination for Southern Sudan’ thereby also officially endorsing the Declaration of Principles brokered in 1994 by IGAD.⁷⁷⁷ Though the SPLM/A rejected the Khartoum Peace Agreement and the viability of the accord languished on its own account, ironically the short-term concession of RSD transitioned into a permanent arrangement as long as the government was forced to adhere to the IGAD process.⁷⁷⁸ In a surprising twist throughout the IGAD negotiations it was the SPLM that

⁷⁷⁵ Ezekiel Gatkuoth, interview with author, 25 January 2007.

⁷⁷⁶ For a theoretical overview on possible orientations to the State by a minority group see Ted Robert Gurr, “Transforming Ethno-Political Conflicts: Ext, Autonomy, or Access?,” in *Conflict Transformation*, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 1-30.

⁷⁷⁷ A. H. Abdel Salam and Alex de Waal, *The Phoenix State*, 202.

⁷⁷⁸ For the rationale behind the SPLM/A’s rejection of the Khartoum Peace Agreement see their official statement, National Executive Council, Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, “SPLM/SPLA Position on the So-Called “Peace Agreement”” (Yei: Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, 1997), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

hesitated to adopt RSD. As one pair of scholars noted, ‘the government delegation seemed at times even willing to have the South secede and form its own government. This was unacceptable to the SPLA, who continued to press for increased autonomy within a federal structure.’⁷⁷⁹ Though the personal disposition of John Garang remains unclear and disputed his public statements remained firmly attached to creating a new, united Sudan.

As a general proposition the international community also harboured deep reservations about promoting RSD. As Michael Ouko of the NSCC peace desk described, ‘the international community was not recognising the right for self-determination... and even now they are not comfortable but in the peace agreement it is there.’⁷⁸⁰ That is even as southern RSD surfaced as a pragmatic and indispensable demand the United States continued to express hesitation and unease. In his report to President Bush, John Danforth attempted to shift the meaning of RSD to federal determination within a united Sudan rather than a choice between a united or separated Sudan. Danforth wrote, ‘a more feasible, and, I think, preferable view of self-determination would ensure the right of the people of southern Sudan to live under a government that respects their religion and culture. Such a system would require robust internal and external guarantees.’⁷⁸¹ Even this limited acceptance was rejected by the US State Department, which downplayed the White House’s limited support.⁷⁸² However, despite the apprehension of John Garang, the SPLM and the United States, the Machakos Protocol signed 20 July 2002 secured for southern Sudanese the right to a robust and internationally monitored self-determination. Standing behind the inclusion of this concession was one staunch and predominant advocate, the New Sudan Council of Churches.

Throughout the 1990s the NSCC publicly backed and pushed an agenda that mandated self-determination. In an official statement written in 1996 and revised in

⁷⁷⁹ Doyle E. Spencer and William J. Spencer, “Third-Party Mediation and Conflict Transformation: Experiences in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Liberia,” in *Conflict Transformation*, ed. Kumar Rupesinghe (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 180.

⁷⁸⁰ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁷⁸¹ John C. Danforth, “Report to the President of the United States on the Outlook for Peace in Sudan” (Washington D.C., 2002), 26, available from www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/outlook_for_peace_in_sudan.pdf; Internet; accessed on 6 December 2007.

⁷⁸² Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars*, 179.

1999 the NSCC urged the ‘reaffirmation of the rights to self-determination of the marginalized groups as an inalienable right.’⁷⁸³ In 2001 the Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Regional Conference encouraged a delegation from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to ‘defend the right to self-determination’ as a jointly pursued ‘policy objective.’⁷⁸⁴ As IGAD negotiations intensified a delegation of church officials met with international partners in London to press them for their acceptance and agreement to encourage their respective governments to adhere to southern RSD as already established in the Declaration of Principles. Out of this conference Sudanese churches issued a widely circulated document provocatively entitled “Let My People Choose.” In this statement the churches listed the documents in which the SPLM/A and/or the Government of Sudan had affirmed RSD requesting therefore that ‘mediators hold the parties to bilateral or multilateral covenants they have sealed.’⁷⁸⁵ The document clearly argues that these frameworks were ‘categorical about the options of unity on one hand and independence of south Sudan on the other’ and that ‘at no time [has] the term RSD been used to mean internal self-determination, i.e. options within one united Sudan only.’⁷⁸⁶ Four months later the position advocated by the council of churches was confirmed and incorporated as official in the Machakos Protocol.

As in other areas while multiple civil society voices argued for RSD the NSCC issued the clearest, most consistent, most read and most influential articulation for southern determination.⁷⁸⁷ Special Envoy John Danforth confirmed in his report to President Bush the rigidity of the council of churches position on incorporating RSD:

⁷⁸³ Sudan Council of Churches and New Sudan Council of Churches, “Here We Stand in Action for Peace” (Morges, Norway: Sudan Council of Churches and New Sudan Council of Churches, 1996; revised, Amani Centre, Kenya, 1999), 7.

⁷⁸⁴ Bishop Macram Max Gassis on behalf of the Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Regional Conference to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 30 March 2001, University of Durham. For a broader collection of official Sudanese Catholic statements see Diocese of Rumbek, *The Church in Sudan Journeying Towards Justice and Peace* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001).

⁷⁸⁵ Sudan Council of Churches and New Sudan Council of Churches, “Let My People Choose” (London: Sudan Council of Churches and New Sudan Council of Churches, 2002), 17.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁸⁷ For an alternate advocate see for example John Lok Jok, “The Right to Self-Determination and the Preservation of the Cultural Identity of South Sudan,” a paper presented at the 2001 Sudan Conference organised by Sudan Focal Point-Europe (Unpublished, 2001), Centre for Documentation and Advocacy, Nairobi.

The hostility of Christians to the Islamic government was strongly expressed by Christian clergy at a meeting I had with them during my January 2002 trip. I convened the meeting to explore whether they would support the creation in the near future of a system for mediating religious grievances, even before a peace agreement. Their very negative response was that such a system would not work, and that the only way for Christians to deal with the government was by “self-determination.” By including the right to self-determination in any peace agreement, they believed they would be protected in the event the elements of an agreement on religious rights were not implemented.⁷⁸⁸

Even after the Machakos Protocol the NSCC continued to issue position statements asking that future protocols strengthen the feasibility of RSD by clarifying related issues such as border determination, guarantees of neutrality, voter eligibility and mechanisms for church and international education and monitoring procedures.⁷⁸⁹ Significantly however, following Machakos the NSCC itself came under pressure and was forced to ‘soften’ its stance on RSD advocacy in order to reduce a perceived image of promoting division and separation.⁷⁹⁰ Nonetheless, with the SPLM, IGAD negotiators and the international community the NSCC lobbied persistently and ultimately successfully for the inclusion of southern self-determination.

The NSCC overcame misgivings particularly in relation to John Garang and the SPLM because the NSCC accurately reflected widespread popular sentiment and effectively exerted grassroots pressure on the SPLM. The NSCC inherently recognised that ‘solutions that provide democracy at local and regional levels of government and maintain dictatorships, feudalism and other forms of authoritarianism of the central government level have no chance of long-term survival.’⁷⁹¹ The NSCC argued that ‘the SPLM/A did not see itself as merely a southern Sudanese movement, but a movement for the whole Sudan. It was therefore left for southern Sudanese to articulate claims that were specifically southern.’⁷⁹² That is the NSCC claimed that within this arena it was the NSCC and not the SPLM/A that spoke and was working on behalf of southern Sudan. In this regard NSCC claims were accurate. Referring to the Machakos Protocol one southern Sudanese scholar noted, ‘for southerners, the agreement may not contain everything

⁷⁸⁸ John Danforth, “Report to the President of the United States,” 27.

⁷⁸⁹ See for example “Advisory Statements in the Context of Machakos Protocol,” 4-5.

⁷⁹⁰ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 25 January 2006.

⁷⁹¹ Abel Alier, “Comment,” in *Beyond Conflict in the Horn: The Proposals for Peace, Recovery and Development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan*, eds. Martin Doornbos, Lionel Cliffe, Abdel Ghaffer M. Ahmed and John Markakis (The Hague: The Institute of Social Studies, 1992), 13.

⁷⁹² SCC and NSCC, “Let My People Choose,” 14.

they had fought for, but it includes the one issue most people have agreed upon, and that is the right to self-determination.’⁷⁹³ It was highly unlikely that the majority of southern Sudanese would have agreed to any peace arrangement that failed to include self-determination, and at the grassroots level the advocacy for RSD pursued by the churches garnered for the NSCC immense political clout and capital. Political observer Stephen Tut emphasised, ‘[the] church has more influence as we are speaking today in southern Sudan than anybody. If we are comparing all these political parties, [their] influence is not as much as the influence of the church.’⁷⁹⁴ Throughout southern Sudan although the people fought on behalf of the SPLA, they gave their ultimate allegiance to the ideology advanced by the New Sudan Council of Churches. More than any other institution it was the NSCC that stood behind a campaign to ensure the viability of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by overcoming international and SPLM opposition to include the southern Sudanese right to self-determination in the IGAD peace process.

Analysis and Conclusion

The third strategy endorsed by the New Sudan Council of Churches in their pursuit of negotiated peace and communal stabilisation was international advocacy. In this regard the NSCC stood behind church endeavours that influenced and substantiated the IGAD peace process, mobilised international concern and engagement particularly within the United States and through active promotion overcame hesitations regarding the inclusion of the right to self-determination in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The effectiveness of this strategy relied less on tactical decisions taken by the NSCC and more on an intentional collaboration that nurtured and fostered international linkages in order to ensure that peace was supported and pushed within southern Sudan, regionally and internationally.

Specifically, within southern Sudan the NSCC organised various people-to-people peace conferences that reconciled divided grassroots communities,

⁷⁹³ Jok Madut Jok, *Sudan: Race, Religion, and Violence*, 256.

⁷⁹⁴ Stephen Tut, interview with author, 18 January 2006. The ability of the churches to generate political authority and ideology further testifies to a growing behind the scenes Christian-based civil religion in south Sudan.

rehabilitated traditional leadership, increased the participatory role of civil society and pressured the SPLM/A to pursue negotiated settlement in good faith while adopting measures of democracy, human rights and good governance. Regionally, the NSCC impacted the IGAD Forum by lobbying for ongoing participation by the Kenyan and Ugandan governments, fostering a more conducive peace building environment in southern Sudan on which IGAD negotiators capitalised, conferring religious validation and helping secure broader international involvement particularly by the United States. Internationally the NSCC influenced the involvement of the



Figure 26 – Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.

US through the disbursement of reliable information, personally visiting and submitting testimony to key church and congressional representatives, facilitating fact finding missions and bilateral relationships with governmental and NGO institutions and helping connect US coalition leaders to John Garang and Lazaro Sumbeiywo. Within the actual mechanisms of the CPA itself the thumbprint of the NSCC is most clearly illustrated in the official acceptance of southern self-determination.

The NSCC was an interconnecting hub that linked together divergent ethnic groups within southern Sudan, the SPLA with other southern military factions, the grassroots of southern Sudan with the SPLM/A and the IGAD Forum and southern Sudan as a whole with international awareness campaigns, partners and engaged involvement. Jacqueline Wilson, a Senior Program Officer at the US Institute of Peace commented that:

The reputation of the New Sudan Council of Churches was that if you needed to get anything done in the south, you needed to operate in the south, if you wanted to know who was who in the south that the New Sudan Council of Churches was key... The SPLA and the SPLM they were a military movement not really a political movement... and that they had taken on this political role which in essence circumvented the role of the tribal leaders in many respects and pushed the tribal leaders to a less important role. But the New Sudan Council of Churches was good [and] bridged those gaps among the societies in the south.⁷⁹⁵

The NSCC therefore was at the forefront of organising and advancing partnership and peace building with national, mid-level leaders and with the grassroots,

⁷⁹⁵ Jacqueline Wilson, interview with author, 25 January 2007.

functioned as the central conduit through which a reconciled and reunited southern Sudanese populace applied pressure on the SPLM/A and stood behind, directly and indirectly, much of the IGAD peace process and international pressure. More than any other single institution or movement from a southern Sudanese perspective it was the influence of the church that promoted reconciliation, increased communal stabilisation and facilitated the Sudanese road to peace.

Southern Sudanese churches exerted such a predominant political influence, particularly after the 1991 SPLA fragmentation, because the churches maintained close solidarity with the southern Sudanese grassroots. Inheriting a mantle of southern Sudanese religious leadership churches imbibed grassroots sentiments that honed efforts beyond relief or development to one single embodiment: negotiated peace with an option for self-determination. Closely tied to the grassroots the NSCC utilised its office as a means through which popular sentiment received expression in the development of internal, regional and international strategies that furthered negotiated peace.

While the NSCC played a critical peace building role during the civil war it is important to note that following the signing of the CPA the NSCC has struggled to extend its influence throughout southern Sudan, transition into new means of effective engagement and experienced a significant drain of NSCC leadership to governmental posts.⁷⁹⁶ One employee of the NSCC described that:

Maybe in some ways we concentrated [too] much on one particular region of Sudan and neglected the other areas... The senior [church] leadership knows what NSCC is all about but some people, the laity, don't know what NSCC is all about... We concentrated much on the issues rather than on also trying to bring up, to update the laity on the role the council was playing.⁷⁹⁷

In addition, Haruun Ruun has received criticism for seeking and receiving a two year appointment extension in 2001 that violated an eight year limit imposed on the Executive Secretary by the NSCC constitution.⁷⁹⁸ Ruun has also been negatively cited by western missionaries affiliated with his church background, the Sudan Interior Church, for self-promotion and becoming 'very, very greedy' following his

⁷⁹⁶ For example Haruun Ruun was appointed as Special Advisor to President Bashir, Telar Deng as Minister of State for Presidential Affairs (South Sudan) and Matthew Mathiang Deang as a Member of Parliament in the Government of Southern Sudan.

⁷⁹⁷ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 25 January 2006.

⁷⁹⁸ Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier, interview with author, 14 January 2006.

sponsorship at Columbia Bible College in the United States.⁷⁹⁹ There are, furthermore, three other important ways in which the NSCC has failed to sustain its advocacy.

First, the NSCC has ceased its people-to-people peace conferences choosing instead to delegate the responsibility to a newly created NGO, the Resource Centre for Civil Leadership (RECONCILE). RECONCILE seeks 'to facilitate processes for equipping communities in Sudan with knowledge and skills for peacebuilding, trauma healing, good governance and social transformation.'⁸⁰⁰ According to Del and Debbie Braaksma the NSCC initiated RECONCILE in order to ensure that the NSCC remained responsive to southern Sudanese needs without becoming 'programmatic.'⁸⁰¹ Though the same board of directors governs RECONCILE and the NSCC thus far RECONCILE has failed to develop significant recognition or broad interaction. Southern Sudan remains deeply divided and minor ethnic incidents have continued to flare and threaten further southern fragmentation. Individual church denominations have sought to respond to several of these occurrences but they are unable to recreate the pressure or expertise exerted by the NSCC. Politically it is the upcoming referendum with the possibility of secession that maintains tentative southern unity and it is unfortunate that as the only institution inside south Sudan with the capacity to transition ethnic divisions the NSCC has failed to proactively engage ethnic conceptualisations or construct platforms of deeper and lasting unification.⁸⁰²

Second, the New Sudan Council of Churches has failed to substantively hold the Government of Southern Sudan accountable particularly in relation to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Many of the churches in

⁷⁹⁹ Dick Ackley, South Central Regional Director of Serving in Mission, interview with author, 8 January 2007, Dallas, Texas. For more on Ruun's early connection to the Sudan Interior Church see William B. Anderson, "Modern Martyrs of the Church: A. Martyrs in Melut," in *Announcing the Light: Sudanese Witness to the Gospel*, ed. Andrew C. Wheeler (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 188-98.

⁸⁰⁰ "RECONCILE International Profile" (Kampala: Resource Centre for Civil Leadership, 2003). RECONCILE is currently based in Kampala, Uganda and lead by Emmanuel Lowilla.

⁸⁰¹ Del and Debbie Braaksma, missionaries of Reformed Church of America with RECONCILE, interview with author, 3 April 2006, Kampala.

⁸⁰² While 'the cultural features that signal the boundary may change,' it is clear that a 'continuing dichotomizations between members and outsiders' exists in southern Sudan. Fredrick Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrick Barth (Bergen-Oslo: Universitets Forlaget, 1969), 14.

Africa have struggled to maintain their prophetic task following the transition to democracy and in this respect the NSCC is not an exception.⁸⁰³ In particular there is an immediate need for the NSCC to disseminate information and raise awareness regarding rights guaranteed in the CPA throughout the grassroots of south Sudan⁸⁰⁴ and to assist the Government of Southern Sudan in the moulding of electoral systems and mechanics in preparation for the referendum.⁸⁰⁵ The establishment of peace is a process, a concept articulated by the NSCC during the people-to-people peace endeavours but largely neglected following the signing of the CPA.⁸⁰⁶ As Samuel Ador of the SCC articulated:

We are almost making the same mistake as in 1972 when we had done our part in bringing the two conflicting parties to peace agreement and relaxed. The church relaxed. The church did not follow up what was going to happen so our role became completely redundant. We didn't put much effort to see that peace was maintained and after ten years the whole thing got blown up. The people went to war which concluded last year. After ten years it was blown up. And after we have initiated and we worked on it we went and slept again. Now what I am not seeing here in the churches today, peace has been signed but is that enough? When there is no gunshot and there is complete silence of the gunshot is that sufficient? ... I think the church shouldn't be feeling satisfied because even the implementation itself is at stake at the moment.⁸⁰⁷

Third, the NSCC has failed to meaningfully engage or promote Christian-Muslim dialogue.⁸⁰⁸ Though Islam remains a very sensitive issue within south Sudan

⁸⁰³ John W. de Gruchy, "Theological Reflections on the Task of the Church in the Democratisation of Africa," in *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*, ed. Paul Gifford (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 47-60.

⁸⁰⁴ Individual denominations have irregularly attempted to facilitate this task but it remains sporadic and limited. For an example of one such attempt by the ECS see "Report on the Greater Upper Nile Peace Building Workshop" (Malakal: Episcopal Church of Sudan, 2005), Episcopal Church of Sudan Office for the Justice and Peace Commission, Khartoum.

⁸⁰⁵ For more on the role of elections in the transition to African multiparty democracies see Roger Southall, "Electoral System and Democratization in Africa," in *Voting for Democracy: Watershed Elections in Contemporary Anglophone Africa*, eds. John Daniel, Roger Southall and Morris Szeftel (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 19-36; John W. Harbeson, "Rethinking Democratic Transitions: Lessons from Eastern and Southern Africa," in *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, ed. Richard Joseph (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 39-55.

⁸⁰⁶ There is little agreement 'on how to determine when a large-scale armed conflict – whether within or between states – has come to a definitive end.' Charles King, *Ending Civil Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 21.

⁸⁰⁷ Samuel Ador, interview with author, 28 March 2006.

⁸⁰⁸ For a general perspective on Christian-Muslim dialogue see Matthew Hasan Kuka, "Managing Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa," in *Christianity and Social Change in Africa: Essays in Honor of J. D. Y. Peel*, ed. Toyin Falola (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 391-411; David Herbert, "Islam and Human Rights," in *Religion and Social Transformation*, ed. David Herbert (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 65-114.

it is critical to the long-term sustenance and viability of peace.⁸⁰⁹ Reflective of the broader Christian community in south Sudan the NSCC's tendency to eschew building relationships with the Islamic community has strong political implications. Coupled with its insistence on the right to self-determination the NSCC has in effect advocated for only one form of political peace for southern Sudan – secession. The NSCC has done little to promote the attractiveness of north-south unification or to forge north-south links and should the referendum yield separation, by its activities it is clear that southern Sudanese Christians would perceive at the very minimum an implicit confirmation of religious validation from the NSCC.⁸¹⁰ Should the south opt for unity it is imperative to communal stabilisation and political reconciliation that the NSCC actively promote at every level dialogue with the Muslim community.

Though NSCC advocacy has not significantly extended to post-CPA southern ethnic reconciliation, CPA implementation or Christian-Muslim dialogue, during the civil war NSCC advocacy was critical to the establishment of southern peace. In addition to leading from the forefront internal reunification and centrally applying pressure on the SPLM/A, the New Sudan Council of Churches pursued a third efficacious strategy – international advocacy. Supporting the IGAD peace process, encouraging US involvement and securing the right to self-determination the NSCC stood behind the brokering of the CPA facilitating at every level the mediation of political peace. Throughout the civil war the NSCC proved the primary interlocutor linking together behind the scenes disconnected grassroots, regional and international strands thereby strengthening and ultimately securing the road to Sudanese peace.

⁸⁰⁹ For more on grassroots southern Sudanese perceptions regarding Islam and the civil war see Chapter Four.

⁸¹⁰ For an initial Christian reflection on interfaith theology and dialogue see Samuel E. Kayanga, "Shari'a Law and Its Implications Upon Christian Communities in Sudan: Towards Contextual Inter-Faith Theology" (Masters diss., University of Edinburgh, 2001).

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

‘In this war it was only the church that was accompanying [the people].’

Michael Ouko⁸¹¹

‘Frankly speaking this peace, without the church, it would not have come because the church has sacrificed in so many aspects to bring this peace whether materially or spiritually.’

Stephen Tut⁸¹²

War has devastated south Sudan. With two million southerners dead and several million still displaced internally or in refugee camps in surrounding countries south Sudan experienced deep fragmentation and communal instability. The second civil war challenged and altered traditional mechanisms of peacemaking, cohesion, and leadership and spanning over two decades impacted south Sudan at every level. In the midst of flight and disintegration one agency surfaced as a primary interlocutor, the southern Sudanese churches.⁸¹³ As Christianity exponentially grew throughout southern Sudan, churches increased communal stability, rehabilitated traditional patterns of identification, navigated endeavours of southern reconciliation and pursued strategies of conflict resolution. As a conclusion this chapter will review the impact of the churches at the grassroots and national level and will delineate several conflict mediatory keys that emerge from the churches’ endeavours.

Throughout the civil war Christianity rapidly expanded throughout southern Sudan so that potentially as much as seventy percent of south Sudan would currently self-identify with Christianity. Perceived as a counterbalancing force to the Arabic nationalism and Islamic predominance of northern Sudan, Christianity developed

⁸¹¹ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁸¹² Stephen Tut, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁸¹³ Rather than strict doctrinal demarcation, the term ‘churches’ refers to social and political affiliation and indicates a loose collaboration within those areas between the denominations. Specifically, endeavours by Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Pentecostal churches were highlighted as they represent the largest and most prominent denominations in south Sudan.

close links with southern ethnicities while providing a framework in which those ethnicities could interact in solidarity and joint participation. Maintaining traditional patterns and processes of organisation churches proffered a number of important communal benefits ranging from reconciliation, education and resource sharing networks. By granting unmediated spiritual access to God and by capitalising on key Old Testament prophecies Christianity enabled a framework of hope that reinterpreted suffering and the civil war and empowered communities and individuals to retain meaning, purpose and control. Embedded in a holistic cosmology with spiritual and physical dimensions, Christianity as parlayed through southern Sudanese churches substantively impacted grassroots and national levels by increasing communal stabilisation and national resolution.

Within the grassroots, Kakuma Refugee Camp, as analysed in Chapter Two, demonstrated the deepest influence of southern Sudanese Christianity on community



Figure 27 – ECS Celebration, Kakuma Refugee Camp

organisation and orientation. Situated in arid northwestern Kenya, throughout the 1990s ethnic divisions and armed conflict beset Kakuma Refugee Camp resulting in loss of life, destruction of property and a tense and divisive atmosphere. In this context the churches bolstered communal stability by recreating traditional societal patterns that emphasised shared identification and solidarity and stressed the importance of communal morality as conveyed by trusted elder custodians. In

addition, churches modelled several social initiatives and cultural developments such as economic sustenance, education and increased gender equality. That is the church rehabilitated traditional patterns of cohesion and responding to external pressure helped transition those patterns into a framework more compatible with contemporary realities. Furthermore the church was the predominant actor in responding to armed ethnic confrontations organising reconciliation and peace building endeavours, encouraging identification beyond tribal boundaries and demonstrating practical modalities of interaction especially pertinent in the midst of easing active conflict. Following a visit to Kakuma, Edith Linnemeyer noted that the churches functioned as a reservoir of hope and that ‘the refugees in Kakuma refugee camp need that hope. It gives them the feeling that their situation can be changed,

that one day they will have a better life. It also gives them the possibility to face their actual lives and be more active regarding their own rights.’⁸¹⁴ Reflected in the number of adherents, claims of Christian exclusivity, political endeavours enacted by the churches and public incorporation of Christian symbols and leadership, the impact of Christianity is deep, substantial and primary in shaping ongoing developments. In Kakuma Refugee Camp the churches were at the forefront of beneficially influencing communal stability, reconciliation and political resolution.

Among the internally displaced of Hajj Yusuf in Khartoum, examined in Chapter Three, while the influence of the churches were significant they were not at the forefront of shaping cultural constructions. Rather, the churches specifically, and southern Sudanese generally, remained discriminated secondary participants in an overarching northern and Islamic paradigm. Vulnerable in such a setting displaced southerners increasingly turned towards churches for advice, help and divine sanctification. Heavily shaped by Pentecostal emphasis on experience and practical life application for many, churches functioned as a stabilising factor that dispensed practical suggestions and guidance at key life moments and transitions. Churches also served as hubs of solidarity that centralised political opposition uniting southern ethnicities, providing a forum for resistance and helping procure beneficial interaction with the dominant culture. Though identification with Christianity was expansive, it was somewhat shallow. Churches, however, beneficially strengthened communal stabilisation by consistently intersecting with displaced southerners who increasingly turned inward towards the churches as central custodians of strength, guidance, political resistance and divine blessing.

In the second section of Chapter Three, Olijj Refugee Camp in Uganda was explored as a third grassroots community. Subjected to intense and sustained violence, insecurity and resource scarcity due primarily to the LRA, refugees in Olijj were profoundly traumatised throughout the second civil war. Churches in Olijj have encouraged general unification of the community and eased cycles of revenge killing on the basis of shared and joint communal suffering. Further increasing communal stability, churches have helped shoulder public burdens associated with sickness, death and burial and helped posit within the community a secure hope of eternal

⁸¹⁴ Edith Linnemeyer, “The Religious Experience of Sudanese Refugees, Kakuma Refugee Camp,” in *The Church In Sudan: Its Impact – Past, Present and Future*, vol. 1 (Limuru: New Sudan Council of Churches and Nile Theological College, 1997), 17.

peace that rectifies suffering and gives meaning to experienced difficulty. On the other hand, influenced by collective residual memories and as evidenced by an open acceptance of traditional religious practices, many within the community perceive that the influence of Christianity is actively diminishing. That is, within Oligi Refugee Camp although the churches retain an important influence and contribute to communal stability and ethnic and familial reconciliation, the impact of Christianity was self-articulated as low or culturally behind.

Taken as a whole each of these three grassroots communities represent a specific point along a spectrum of possible manifestations. Though the overarching role of the churches within the community differed in each setting, in each churches substantively contributed to communal stabilisation, political resolution and southern ethnic reconciliation. Despite important differences each context also manifested a growing incorporation of Christian symbols, vocabulary and leadership in the public forum. Collectively the three refugee camps point to a recent establishment of Christian influenced civil religion that is both a partial cause and result of the substantive social and political impact generated by the churches throughout the civil war. In the immediate future the impact of Christianity on public discourse will remain a prominent feature of south Sudan. For example one recent Catholic pastoral letter promised:

The Church with the dawning of peace renews her full commitment to fulfil her civil responsibilities and to *implement the spirit and action enclosed in the agreements of peace...* The Church intends to participate with the State in the formulation of the spirit and letter of the new *Constitution* and the renewal of the *legal system* to safeguard the respect due to the human dignity and rights of all Sudanese people. The Church remains firmly and freely committed to be the “*voice of the people*”... Therefore the Church together with other groups in civil society must have access to decision making within governmental structures.⁸¹⁵

The growth of Christian identification and influenced civil religion within the grassroots of southern Sudan enabled the New Sudan Council of Churches, as an ecumenical institution representing all of the predominant denominations in Sudan, to increasingly engage in a political strategy of southern reconciliation and national resolution. Asked to summarise the contributions of the NSCC to the securing of Sudanese peace Michael Ouko of the peace desk responded:

First is advocacy. We did that. We are even still advocating for the stability of this peace agreement... We did also of course facilitate many reconciliation peace initiatives. Three,

⁸¹⁵ “‘I Will Make Everything New!’ Pastoral Letter of the Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Conference On the Occasion of the Sudan Peace Agreement” (Nairobi: Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 2004), 8, italics original.

we have also been a platform for the international community to use in supporting Sudan peace initiatives. Many organisations or governments they want to help Sudan but there is no system of delivering that help so we have also been a channel for facilitating that.⁸¹⁶

That is the NSCC conscientiously promoted a three-tiered peace fostering strategy, built southern reconciliation and facilitated national resolution.

First, the NSCC pursued southern reconciliation and grassroots stabilisation through the people-to-people peace initiatives. These endeavours bypassed elite military commanders and focused on enlisting traditional mid-level leaders in a process that empowered grassroots communities to broker ceasefires, implement practices of good governance and restore communal boundaries of moral interaction. Though each of the numerous people-to-people conferences differed in their exact influence, the process commenced at Wunlit in 1999 fundamentally impacted and furthered the construction of communal stability and national resolution in two ways. First, the various agreements rehabilitated traditional leadership and moral guidelines within local geographies restoring mechanisms for peace building, enhancing judicial accountability and promoting healthy interethnic cooperation and interaction. Next, the conferences reunited a fragmented southern populace enabling military commanders to focus on resolving the conflict with the north from a position of unified strength and singularly voiced demands. As was demonstrated the SPLM/A, the IGAD peace process and the international community all relied upon this southern reunification. Ezekiel Gatkuoth, the Head of the Government of Southern Sudan's Mission to the United States commented, 'without the churches we would not be able to reconcile communities... If you have communities fighting one another then definitely you will not be able to win that big war because your own people are fighting one another.'⁸¹⁷ The NSCC, therefore, was at the forefront of organising southern reconciliation, internal peace mediation and a southern environment conducive to external peace negotiation and it was this grassroots reunification that functioned as the southern basis for national resolution.

Second, the NSCC utilised its connections to the grassroots and political clout developed by the people-to-people process to channel criticism and popular pressure on the SPLM/A. Overcoming opposition from John Garang, at the Yei Dialogue the NSCC initiated a process that opened the SPLM/A to greater accountability, forced

⁸¹⁶ Michael Ouko, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

⁸¹⁷ Ezekiel Gatkuoth, interview with author, 25 January 2007.

the SPLM to adapt its governance practices and allowed the SPLA to begin recouping support in western Equatoria. Describing the relationship of the church with Garang, Director Taib Hag-Atia of the University of Khartoum's Centre for Peace and Research expounded, 'it came through a process, and not an easy process, a very difficult process of trying to refine roles and trying together to ensure the welfare and safety of the villagers who were threatened by the army, the government and the SPLA... Through this process came a sort of working relationship between SPLA and the Sudanese church.'⁸¹⁸ This relationship allowed the NSCC to significantly contribute to the reunification of various military divisions with the SPLA, urge the SPLM to adopt measures of democracy and good governance in the 'liberated' areas, further broader dialogue and participation by civil society and pressure the SPLM to pursue negotiated settlement with the Government of Sudan in good faith and with one important alteration, the inclusion of the right to self-determination. The southern Sudanese grassroots increasingly turned towards the NSCC as the trusted central conduit through which popular pressure was applied on the elite leadership of the SPLM/A to pursue beneficial national resolution.

The third peace building strategy utilised by the NSCC was international advocacy pursued regionally and within Europe and the United States. Lobbying the governments of Kenya and Uganda the NSCC helped solidify support for the IGAD Forum, invested the process with religious symbols of validation and enabled the efficaciousness of IGAD mediation. Stephen Tut of the Centre for Documentation and Advocacy communicated:

People-to-people peace was what was adapted by the politicians. Even the IGAD benefited from it... because it was through people-to-people peace that the southerners themselves have come to tolerate each other [and] they have come to reconcile... Before they would not even come together, they would not even speak together until they had the people-to-people peace. And then when this idea of people-to-people peace came and was successful then the IGAD were able to bring the leaders of the factions together because after all they have been pressured by the people in their community by the people-to-people peace that you must talk, you must forgive each other, you must reconcile, you must seek the common interests of the southerners. And this is what the IGAD picked up.⁸¹⁹

Through various focal points and organised fact finding missions the NSCC sought further international support for the Sudanese peace process realising in the United States the fullest expression of its international advocacy campaigns. By forming

⁸¹⁸ Taib Hag-Atia, interview with author, 29 March 2006.

⁸¹⁹ Stephen Tut, interview with author, 18 January 2006.

partnerships with key leaders, particularly with Faith McDonnell, the NSCC and affiliated church leaders significantly encouraged US engagement by personally lobbying US congressional representatives, testifying before congressional hearings, providing consistent, reliable information utilised by the US coalition, serving as a constructive soundboard for US partners and functioning as an important dynamic link between those partners and John Garang and Lazaro Sumbeiywo. Importantly the NSCC also overcame initial SPLM and international opposition and secured in the final peace agreement a southern Sudanese right to self-determination. RSD, regional involvement and international engagement was critical to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and standing behind each one of these endeavours was one primary advocate pushing, promoting and facilitating southern Sudanese peace and national resolution: the New Sudan Council of Churches.

Therefore both within the examined grassroots communities and at the national level it was southern Sudanese churches that functioned as the predominant actor facilitating and securing communal stabilisation and national resolution. With its fullest expression in Kakuma Refugee Camp and in the NSCC people-to-people peace process, southern Sudanese churches were at the forefront of encouraging the development of peace and achieving interethnic southern reconciliation and reunification. Responding to the efficaciousness of these endeavours, as was seen among the displaced southerners of Khartoum and in the churches' relationship to the leadership of the SPLM/A, the southern Sudanese grassroots consistently turned towards the churches as the central custodian of divine blessing, trusted in times of difficult transition as a source for practical guidance and utilised as the central conduit for conveying pressure, resistance and political mobilisation. Though it was not included as a negotiating partner and signatory and though its influence is currently somewhat diminished, as was illustrated in Oligi Refugee Camp and in NSCC international advocacy campaigns southern Sudanese churches stood behind a reorientation of hope and the construction of an externally secured peace process. Southern Sudanese churches remained at the forefront of southern reunification and reconciliation, a central component in the overarching peace process and by conscientiously developing a strategy that empowered other actors, stood directly behind the IGAD peace process, pressure on the SPLM/A and international engagement with Sudan. It was the southern Sudanese churches, therefore, that facilitated communal stabilisation, national resolution and the road to southern Sudanese peace.

The second Sudanese civil war lasted over twenty years bridging the rhetoric of ‘Cold War’ politics to religiously nuanced articulations of the ‘War on Terror.’ Leaving a wake of massive destruction and flagrant human rights abuses the war drew upon developments at the United Nations, multinational aid organisations, European and American concerns and the regional interests of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda among others to remain never wholly internal or externally imposed. Rather local southern Sudanese concerns, regional politics and international interests formed an interlocking dynamic that mutually reinforced the other. In the same way the development of peace in southern Sudan rests upon local initiatives partnered with regional accountability and leadership augmented further by international engagement. In this context it is possible to identify several conflict mediatory keys with broader implications in relation to the establishment of peace in the midst of civil war.

First, religious leaders and initiatives can be an important source for establishing peace. Reviewing the impact of religious leaders on the people-to-people peace conferences William Lowrey identifies six principles that have broader implications regarding both the impact of Christianity on the southern Sudanese peace process and elsewhere:

1. Religious leaders placed their moral authority behind a process of conflict resolution.
2. Religious organizations provided a network for resourcing the process.
3. Religious beliefs formed the basic precepts that led to a settlement.
4. Religious rituals provided the symbols for cementing or sealing the agreement.
5. Religious people became key actors during the implementation phase as well as in response to violations.
6. Religious interpretations of traditional prophecies affected current events.⁸²⁰

In a war zone context where ‘there is a lot of suffering, always a lot of suffering,’ Christian leaders made a fundamental difference in south Sudan.⁸²¹ Christian rituals provided an alternate framework of interpretation employing the symbolism of the cross, scriptural references of promised deliverance and divine sanctioning to empower southern Sudanese as primary actors with reinvigorated hope and purpose. Both at the grassroots level and within IGAD Christian leaders utilised local,

⁸²⁰ William O. Lowrey, “Passing the Peace... People to People,” 169-82.

⁸²¹ William Geit, interview with author, 12 February 2006.

regional and international church networks to provide economic support and political solidarity to further the peace process. As Douglas Johnston notes, ‘individuals operating on a religious or spiritual basis... are often better equipped to reach people at the level of the individual and the subnational group – where inequalities and insecurities are often most keenly felt – than are most political leaders.’⁸²² As was demonstrated in south Sudan religious actors are especially constructive when they focus on building meaningful ecumenical representation, partner with other religious traditions in the public discourse on politics and social morality, cooperate with civil society and civil leadership in planning and implementing grassroots policy, build reconciliation among divergent groups and seek to strengthen local governing mechanisms that encourage open participation. Though often neglected in international relations, as is clear in south Sudan, religious leaders have the potential to generate peace awareness, validate peace processes and implement peace agreements.⁸²³

Second, there is a critical need to appropriate a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution that mobilises efforts locally, regionally and internationally with actors from each sphere contributing within each arena. Locally, as there is a legitimate danger that international NGOs become vested conflict participants ‘when their workers engage in conflict resolution,’ it is essential that international organisations work to empower indigenous actors.⁸²⁴ International NGOs can however offer meaningful contributions to resolving internal conflicts when they work to stimulate conducive peace building environments by providing to internal agents needed resources and education while self-focusing on broader international advocacy.⁸²⁵ Indigenous actors need to also understand the nature of these relationships and themselves develop a comprehensive strategy that is rooted in local

⁸²² Douglas Johnston, “Introduction: Beyond Power Politics,” in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

⁸²³ Though slightly dated for a constructive example regarding the potential of churches in international relations see David A. Steele, “Role of the Church as an Intermediary in International Conflict: A Theological Assessment of Principled Negotiation” (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1991).

⁸²⁴ Wafula Okuma, “Humanitarian International NGOs and African Conflicts,” in *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs*, eds. Henry F. Carey and Oliver P. Richmond (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 132.

⁸²⁵ For an overview of the potential role of international NGOs in resolving internal conflicts see Thomas G. Weis, “Nongovernmental Organizations and Internal Conflict,” in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 435-59.

customs, symbols and methodological paradigms. For example when designing the people-to-people peace process the New Sudan Council of Churches eschewed some international approaches instead conscientiously building a process that resonated with local sentiments even when such an approach was outside of normal Christian incorporation. Churches and their representative ecumenical bodies have a certain moral and theological obligation to engage in conflict resolution in general and reconciliation in specific that in Africa is particularly related to ethnic interaction.⁸²⁶ There is a need for churches to adopt the perspective of famed southern Sudanese chief Deng Majok: ‘the best way to unite and protect one’s own interests and those of one’s close relatives is to safeguard the interests of the stranger and the more distant person first.’⁸²⁷ In conflict resolution and peace implementation there is furthermore a principle of inverse application. When the individuals charged as ‘keepers of the peace’ remain relatively numerically small in proportion to the population and focus their efforts solely on signed agreements and constitutions, there remains a high likelihood of war. Inversely, as human and legal rights and peace building endeavours permeate throughout the population and the primary ‘keepers of the peace’ shift from representatives to grassroots constituents the likelihood of war decreases. The greater the ‘keepers of the peace’ the less likely is a return to war. Significantly the NSCC understood this principle and therefore bypassed elite military commanders and initiated reconciliation and peace building endeavours with mid-level leaders who in cooperation opened the possibility of grassroots reunification. From an institutional standpoint top Christian leaders have a far greater potential of effectively influencing mid-level leaders and promoting grassroots response than on elite political and military commanders. However, as was demonstrated by the NSCC in south Sudan, once mid-level leaders are strengthened and empowered and combined with a reunified grassroots populace internal and ecumenical organisations can develop immense political clout and exert significant and sustainable pressure on elite political and military leaders. At the

⁸²⁶ For more on the relationship between ethnicity and the development of African democracy see M. A. Mohamed Salih, *African Democracies & African Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 2001). For a collection of theological perspectives on potential church-based approaches to government interaction see Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, eds., *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999).

⁸²⁷ Francis Mading Deng, “Abyei: A Bridge or a Gulf? The Ngok Dinka of Sudan’s North-South Border,” in *White Nile, Black Blood: Leadership, and Ethnicity from Khartoum to Kampala*, eds. Jay Spaulding and Stephanie Beswick (Lawrenceville: The Red Sea Press, 2000), 141.

local level therefore it is critical that interested international parties empower indigenous actors as primary agents who themselves focus on developing a comprehensive strategy that focuses on expanding mid-level leadership and grassroots reconciliation in order to exert pressure on elite leaders to pursue human rights, good governance and negotiated settlement.⁸²⁸

In addition to local actors, approaches and developments, in facilitating resolution to an internal conflict the incorporation of regional institutions and involvement is a second critical component to a comprehensive approach. As ‘the UN Secretariat and the Security Council are simply not well suited to coping with internal conflicts’⁸²⁹ and as Europe, the United States and various African governments have recognised their own limitations in this capacity, there has been a recent conceptual shift ‘open to the idea that regional organizations have a role to play in helping to resolve internal problems... with the proviso, of course, that government consent is fundamental.’⁸³⁰ Even within Africa, sub-regional organisations ‘have shown greater willingness than the [Organization of African Unity] to deal with civil conflicts.’⁸³¹ This shift has increasingly placed the burden for negotiation on regional participatory governments and ‘it is in this context that the [IGAD] initiative on the Sudan should be viewed.’⁸³² When negatively affected, regional organisations inherently possess strong interests in resolving conflict, levers for pressuring accountability and mechanisms for contributing to long-term sustainable economic and political partnerships important to peace implementation. In south Sudan the NSCC recognised the importance of this development and lobbied both regional governments and international observers to strengthen the regional IGAD peace initiative. From a religious perspective, however, ‘churches

⁸²⁸ ‘With governance, we no longer look only at the [democratic] question of “who gets what, when, and how” – that is, distributive politics – but we increasingly examine issues related to the rules of the game, what I call “constitutive politics.”’ Goran Hyden, “Governance and the Reconstitution of Political Order,” in *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, ed. Richard Joseph (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 186.

⁸²⁹ Gil Loescher, *Beyond Charity: International Cooperation and the Global Refugee Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 131.

⁸³⁰ Connie Peck, *Sustainable Peace: The Role of the UN and Regional Organizations in Preventing Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 209.

⁸³¹ James Busumtwi-Sam, “Redefining “Security” after the Cold War: The OAU, the UN, and Conflict Management in Africa,” in *Civil Wars in Africa: Roots and Resolution*, eds. Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), 265.

⁸³² Francis M. Deng, “Anatomy of the Peace Process,” in *Their Brothers’ Keepers: Regional Initiative for Peace in Sudan*, ed. Francis M. Deng (Addis Ababa: Inter Africa Group, 1997), 29.

and Christians in Africa have to be far more conscious of their interdependence, their solidarity with each other across national boundaries' in order to maximise awareness and lobbying campaigns.⁸³³ Regional organisations not only have a role to play in resolving internal conflict, they need to be tactically encouraged and strengthened by both local and international parties.

The resolution of the civil war in Sudan demonstrates that the third component to comprehensive peace building relates to important developments within the international sphere. As already noted, 'the current trend in NGO interventions is away from entry into conflict situations by outsiders towards training people inside the society in conflict in the skills of conflict resolution, and combining those with indigenous traditions.'⁸³⁴ International NGOs, religious actors and governmental representatives also have an important role in generating broad advocacy that will shift international awareness, opinion and engagement. For example, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has adopted three important strategic principles: "the mobilization of shame" related to monitoring and public reporting, precise communication with key decision makers and when available contributing to legal aid, education and 'training in public advocacy.'⁸³⁵ Within international advocacy there is an ongoing need for NGOs and other actors to understand such endeavours as a formation of a joint collaboration with local indigenous partners. As was demonstrated in the shifting of US policy towards constructive engagement with the southern Sudanese peace process, the US coalition was effective because of its enabling of southern Sudanese church actors to personally articulate their own situation through visits to Capitol Hill and with major denominational leaders. Furthermore, Sudanese church agencies supplied consistent and precise information relied upon by the coalition and helped US partners develop working policy



Figure 28 – Sudanese Embassy, Washington D.C.

⁸³³ John W. de Gruchy, "Theological Reflections on the Task of the Church," 59.

⁸³⁴ Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 160.

⁸³⁵ Felice D. Gaer, "Human Rights NGOs in UN Peace Operations," in *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs*, eds. Henry F. Carey and Oliver P. Richmond (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 73-89.

positions and connection to leaders of the opposition movement. That is, international actors have an important role to play locally and local actors have an important role to play internationally. The negotiated settlement in Sudan demonstrates the critical need for a comprehensive approach to peace development by local, regional and international actors targeting local, regional and international spheres. As one group of scholars summarised:

Conflict practitioners have usually advocated longer-term approaches, including empowering embedded parties, changing the regional context, building coalitions in favor of conflict resolution and setting up multiple tracks of dialogue and influence through which a peace process can be approached.⁸³⁶

The third mediatory key demonstrated by the southern Sudanese peace process relates to the essential nature of establishing freedom of religion. Religious freedom constitutes one of the primary building blocks of modern human rights law and understanding. The oldest internationally recognised human right, individuals were first afforded religious freedom under international protection at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.⁸³⁷ Today this right continues to maintain an international prominence ‘expressly recognized in every major international human rights declaration and covenant, as well as in the overwhelming majority of the world’s constitutions.’⁸³⁸ However a word like “indifferent” can mean “impartial,” “fair,” or “just,” or it can mean “unconcerned,” “unmoved,” “apathetic” or “insensible,” and the same is true of “neutral.”⁸³⁹ As was seen in Sudan, despite claims to religious freedom religio-nationalistic impulses continue to contribute to conflict and in the north religious discrimination. Freedom of religion however, is a fundamental freedom and is particularly relevant in the context of political instability as it summarises other relevant human rights. As James Wood states, ‘religious human rights are integral to the advancement of all other human rights because of their

⁸³⁶ Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 140.

⁸³⁷ W. Cole Durham Jr., “Perspectives on Religious Liberty: A Comparative Framework,” in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Legal Perspectives*, eds. Johan D. Van der Vyver and John Witte Jr. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), 1. Westphalia built upon the 1555 Treaty of Augsburg that articulated *cuius regio eius religio*, ‘translated as “he who rules, his is the religion,”’ thereby granting Catholic and Lutheran princes ‘the right to determine the religion of their subjects.’ Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 487, 501.

⁸³⁸ W. Cole Durham Jr., “Perspectives on Religious Liberty,” 9.

⁸³⁹ David Little, “Studying “Religious Human Rights”: Methodological Foundations,” in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Legal Perspectives*, eds. Johan D. Van der Vyver and John Witte Jr. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), 52 FN 16.

intimate grounding in the nature and sacredness of the human person.⁸⁴⁰

Furthermore, 'religious values can also enhance and support liberal democratic institutions and ideas.'⁸⁴¹ Achieving freedom of religion in its fullest sense, therefore, also guarantees other essential human rights: freedom of conscious and thought, organisation and assemblage, individual and communal change and re-association, and unmitigated dissemination of information. Furthermore, incorporating multiple religious constituencies into the public arena minimises the lure of extremism and militancy while creating a culture of open dialogue, respect and understanding. Freedom of religion is the central axiom around which the other human rights encircle.⁸⁴² From a perspective of human rights, therefore, freedom of religion is the fundamental human right and in many contexts, as is seen in Sudan, is critical to the establishment and maintenance of peace.

In an increasingly globalised world where ongoing violence is certain and even predictable it is critical that attention is maintained on theoretical and practical approaches to encouraging conflict resolution.⁸⁴³ The peace process pursued in relation to south Sudan proved effective and demonstrated a melding of local, regional and international interests and actors. Specifically, research undertaken in the thesis has clearly indicated at least seven peace building principles with broader implications:

⁸⁴⁰ James E. Wood Jr., "An Apologia for Religious Human Rights," in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Religious Perspectives*, eds. John Witte Jr. and Johan D. Van der Vyver (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), 476.

⁸⁴¹ Marcy C. Segers, "In Defence of Religious Freedom," in *A Wall of Separation? Debating the Public Role of Religion*, Marcy C. Segers and Ted G. Jelen (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 55.

⁸⁴² Though recognised as important freedom of religion has not often received the same level of support and advocacy as other human rights. For rationales related to this dichotomy see Allen D. Hertzke, "The Political Sociology of the Crusade Against Religious Persecution," in *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliott Abrams (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 69-92. For a means through which secular NGOs could support religious human rights see Michael Roan, "The Role of Secular Non-Governmental Organizations in the Cultivation and Understanding of Religious Human Rights," in *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective: Legal Perspectives*, eds. Johan D. Van der Vyver and John Witte Jr. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), 135-59.

⁸⁴³ 'Most of the violence in the world is quite predictable.' Mark Gibney, "Certain Violence, Uncertain Protection," in *Global Changes in Asylum Regimes*, ed. Daniele Joly (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 27. Still relevant, 'long-term efforts aimed at the underlying problems that make violence likely need to be given more emphasis and made more effective.' Michael E. Brown, "Internal Conflict and International Action," in *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 607.

1. Religious leaders have the potential to generate peace awareness, validate peace processes and implement peace agreements.
2. Peacemaking by religious leaders significantly increases when those leaders build broad and interfaith coalitions, focus on reconciliation and strengthen secular forms of governance and participation.
3. Comprehensive and multi-track approaches to conflict resolution that utilise local, regional and international actors are imperative.
4. Indigenous religious and non-combative agencies can facilitate political peace by focusing on traditional mid-level leaders, reuniting grassroots communities, pressuring elite opposition leaders and directly engaging international advocacy.
5. Regional organisations are central as negotiating agencies with a potential for sustainable accountability.
6. International actors are critical to empowering local indigenous actors and in establishing broader awareness, advocacy and engagement.
7. Freedom of religion is essential to peace development and maintenance.

As indicated in the above principles related to conflict mediation, in south Sudan Christian leaders and spirituality contributed significantly to the establishment of communal stabilisation and national resolution. Among the displaced in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Hajj Yusuf and Olijji Refugee Camp churches re-established traditional patterns of organisation, increased identity categorisations, encouraged ethnic reconciliation, resuscitated hope and in general increased communal stability. Nationally the New Sudan Council of Churches developed southern reunification, pressured the SPLM/A to adopt measures of good governance, partnered with international actors to encourage regional and European and American engagement and in general enabled national resolution. Throughout the second civil war, therefore, as the thesis has clearly demonstrated it was southern Sudanese churches that facilitated the road to Sudanese peace.

Appendix One

Summary of Research among the Displaced in Kakuma, Khartoum and Olijj

	Type of Camp	Predominant Challenge	Predominant Source of Challenge	Perceived Influence of Church	Social Group Associated with Church	Biggest Contribution of Church
Kakuma Refugee Camp	UNHCR Monitored Camp	Inter-southern Ethnic Conflicts	Internal	High, 'Forefront'	Leading Elders, Men	Ethnic Peace, Solidarity, Cultural Reformation
Hajj Yusuf, Khartoum	'Illegal' Urban Settlement	Discrimination, Exclusion from Dominant Culture	External	Medium, 'Culturally Central'	Youth	Beneficial Interaction with Dominant Culture, Bestows Social Sanctity
Olijj Refugee Camp	Rural, Partially Self- Sufficient Community	Psychologically Undermined	External	Low, 'Falling Behind'	Women	Promotes Unity in Face of Suffering, Builds Hope

Appendix Two

Interview and Focus Group Participants

Kenya

Kakuma Refugee Camp

Mary Akop Acher, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

Daniel Achieng, Equatorian*

Abraham Achuth, Deacon of Episcopal Church of Sudan*

James Aker, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Daniel Aketch, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Wilson Adon Akong, Redeemed Church of God*

Teresa Bul Chan, Chair Lady of Nuer community

Reuben Culdias, Lay Leader of Sudan Pentecostal Church*

James Bany Daa, Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Kakuma Refugee Camp

David Deng, Sudan Pentecostal Church Leader, Kakuma Refugee Camp*

Marisan San Deng, Women's Representative on the Nuer Court*

Samuel Deng, High Deacon of Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Jacob Dut, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

John Garang, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

William Geit, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Hilda, Women's Department Leader for Community Department of the Lutheran
World Federation, Kakuma Refugee Camp

Father Jacobs, Priest of Catholic Parish, Director of Don Bosco Vocational Training
Centre

James, School Teacher, Episcopal Church of Sudan

Peter Jawaka, Jehovah's Witness*

Alanya Joseph, Chairman of Equatorian Community

Elizabeth Nacha Kai, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

Peter Panam Kok, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

David Athiel Kong, Equatorian*

John Kong, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

Andrew Kuol, Catholic catechist of Christ the King*

Peter Kwent, Chairman of Bentiu Community

Peter Ngong Lam, Sunday School Director of Presbyterian Church of Sudan

Neville Lado Lok, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

James Ateny Lual, Sudan Pentecostal Church*

Peter Lual, Pastor of Presbyterian Church of Sudan, employee of Open Doors*

Luok, Catholic Christ the King*

Paul Madat, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Tut Mai, Pastor of Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Staff of Mobile Bible School

Gabriel Majok, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Rachel Achoul Majok, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Peter Kuol Maket, secretary of Nuer Court*

Peter Makuac, Associate Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan-Akobo

Job Makeui, teacher

Philip Makueol, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

John Jok Manyout, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

Pili Martin, Peace, Conflict and Reconciliation Programme Officer of Lutheran
World Federation Peace

Rachel Najor Moos, Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

Kerbina Dul Myon, Head Chief of the Nuer Court, Kakuma Refugee Camp*

Peter Kai Nyon, Pastor of Presbyterian Church of Sudan*

Peter, Catholic Christ the King*

Philip, Catholic Christ the King*

John Riak, Evangelist and Church Secretary of Presbyterian Church of Sudan

Samuel, Catholic Christ the King*

Barnaba Uti, Catholic Christ the King*

James Rout Wour, Chairman of Nuer Community

Peter Yueugu, Episcopal Church of Sudan*

Lokichogio

Paul Buol, Pastor of Presbyterian Church of Sudan

Stephen Ter Nyuon Yier, Assistant Director Presbyterian Relief and Development
Agency, former Vice Chairman of New Sudan Council of Churches

Nairobi

James Bouth Cadech, Community Development Officer of PACT Kenya

Matthew Mathiang Deang, Member of Parliament of Government of South Sudan,
former Director of New Sudan Council of Churches Peace Desk

David Ibon, Pastor of Presbyterian Church of Sudan

James Magwat, Director of Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency

Basil Nyama, Pastor of Episcopal Church of Sudan

Michael Ouko, New Sudan Council of Churches Peace Desk

Stephen Tut, Acting Director of Centre for Documentation and Advocacy

Sudan

Juba

James Wani Igga, Speaker of the Parliament of the Government of South Sudan

Justin Kongor, Lay Reader ECS, Deputy Director of Forestry Plans and Extensions,
Ministry of Agriculture, Government of South Sudan

Joseph Marona, Archbishop of Episcopal Church of Sudan

Robert E. Whitehead, Consul General of United States, Juba

Khartoum

Sabat Aba, Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf *

Samuel Nwaylo Ador, Director of Sudan Council of Churches Church and Society
Department

Viviana Aluda, Episcopal Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf*

Gordon Awetch, Pastor Trainee of Shilluk Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Hajj
Yusuf*

Yohannes Benjamin, Pastor of Episcopal Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf*

Eliza Botho, Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf*

Lucia Brown, Episcopal Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf*

Lucia Dak, Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf*

Mary David, Presbyterian Church of Sudan, Hajj Yusuf*

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